THE SUNNA OF DHIKR BEADS

IN RESPONSE TO SHAYKH AL-ALBANI

SHAYKH MAHMUD SA'ID MAMDUH

Translation by

DR. ABDULLAH BIN HAMID 'ALI

Shaykh Mamdūh exposes the flaws in Al-Albani's research and reasoning. He also reveals how his views contravene that of the overwhelming majority of scholars throughout Islamic history including many of those who Al-Albānī himself admired and emulated in a number of areas, like Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, and Imam 'Alī al-Shawkānī.

Dr. Abdullah bin Hamid 'Ali

The Lamppost Education Initiative is pleased to present this fascinating work that responds to the claim by the famed hadith scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Nasir Al-Albani, that the dhikr beads are an innovation (bid'a) of the Deen.

This is a translation of the book entitled Wusūl at-Tahānī bi ithbāti sunniyyati al-subhati wal-raddu 'alā Al-Albānī, or 'Achieving Enjoyment by Establishing that Dhikr Beads are Sunna and the Rebuttal of Al-Albānī

Dr. Abdullah bin Hamid Ali has translated this work of the hadith scholar Shaykh Mahmud Sa'id Mamduh which provides a detailed defense of the use of dhikr beads by directly responding to the hadith based arguments of Shaykh Al-Albani.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
MOST MERCIFUL AND COMPASSIONATE

THE SUNNA OF DHIKR BEADS IN RESPONSE TO SHAYKH AL-ALBĀNĪ

وصول التهاني بإثبات سنية السبحة و الرد على

الألباني

(Wuṣūl al-Tahānī bi Ithbat Sunniya al-Subḥa wa al-Radd ʻalā al-Albānī)

SHAYKH MAḤMŪD SAʿĪD MAMDŪḤ

Translation by
ABDULLĀH BIN ḤAMĪD ʻALĪ

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For the Peacemakers

﴿يأيها الذين آمنوا اذكروا الله ذكرا كثيرا و سبحوه بكرة و أصيلا﴾

O you who believe, remember Allah abundantly, and proclaim His purity at morn and eve.

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SHAYKH MAḤMŪD SA'ĪD MAMDŪḤ

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Ḥājj Nūḥ Al-Albānī (1914-1999 CE) was born in the town of Shkoder, the former capital of the Eastern European nation of Albania. According to his biographers, Shaykh Al-Albānī's religious learning began at home under the tutelage of his father, a poor and religious watch repairman who was learned in Hanafi jurisprudence. At the age of 9, Al-Albānī's father relocated the family to Syria, where the young Al-Albānī started his primary education in the Al-Is'āf Al-Khayrī (Charitable Aid) school. Upon completion of his time at Al-Is'āf Al-Khayrī, Al-Ḥājj Nuh—Al-Albānī's father—made the decision to educate his son according to a specialized curriculum he developed at home. Though antagonists contend with Shaykh Al-Albānī's scholarly credentials, his biographers highlight that during his youth, after studying the Qur'an, elocution, Ḥanafī jurisprudence, grammar, and morphology with his father, he also studied the Ḥanafī work *Marāqī al-Falāḥ* with the Syrian scholar Shaykh Sa'īd b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān al-Burhānī (1892-1967 CE) in

addition to select works on Arabic language and rhetoric. Al-Albānī would later grow fond of and frequented the public study circles of the Syrian scholar of Algerian origin, Shaykh Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bayṭār (1894-1976 CE).

Despite Shaykh Al-Albānī's induction into the classical curriculum during his youth, by the time he reached full adulthood, he developed a love for the prophetic tradition, thereupon relinquishing his father's educational direction dedicating his time to the study of hadith science and related literature. Acquiring his father's trade in watch repair facilitated for Al-Albānī considerable time to research and to write in the area of hadith until he became, perhaps, the most popular hadith scholar of the twentieth century. His original works, redactions, commentaries, and redresses are said to exceed more than 300 in number. However, the most significant of Al-Albānī's contributions to Islam's historical archives are his works written with the goal of clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of the hadiths found in the 6 major canons of the Sunni tradition (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah).

However, not everyone appreciated Al-Albānī's boldness to stir up doubts about the authenticity of the hadiths found in the works of Imam Bukhārī and Imam Muslim: works widely accepted among Sunni scholars to be unquestionably sound in transmission.

The opponents of Al-Albānī objected vociferously to Al-Albānī's grading and re-grading of many of the hadiths in the major collections accusing him not only of disrespect of the early scholars but also of heresy. His opponents set out to undermine his credibility [and often times *ad hominem*] by casting aspersions on his credentials as a hadith scholar, alleging that he had contravened scholarly consensus on a number of important issues, and dubbing him a heretic in light of his adoption of a number of unpopular views concerning interpretative autonomy (ijtihād), blind acceptance (taqlīd), and Islamic mysticism (taṣawwuf).

Al-Albānī believed the chief corrupter of Islamic orthodoxy over the centuries to be the many weak and spurious reports documented in the hadith sources. Consequently, he endeavored to disabuse the prophetic tradition of reports that might reinforce beliefs and practices which threatened the purity of the universal Islamic message in his view. For instance, he objected to the Sufi practice of visiting the graves of saintly people, petitioning God in the name of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and other righteous beings (tawassul), the commemoration and celebration of the Prophet's birthday (mawlid); the erection of shrines over graves; and he declared the use of the Muslim rosary or *dhikr* beads to be an illicit innovation (bid'a). For Al-Albānī and those of his ilk, most of these practices represent either a form of idolatry (shirk) or

intimate at excessive adulation (iṭrā') of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in contravention of express prohibitions against such.

Another point of contention was Al-Albānī's relinquishment of the view in traditional circles that non-specialists ('awāmm) are obligated to blindly accept and follow the views of specialist jurists qualified to carry out absolute interpretative autonomy (mujtahidūn). In Al-Albānī's view, it was not only permissible to throw off the strictures of blind acceptance (taqlīd) in matters of jurisprudence, but that it was prohibited for Muslims—neither layperson nor scholar—to bind themselves to the opinions of a single *mujtahid* scholar or legal school (madhhab). In doing so, Al-Albānī joined the ranks of other historical dissenters, like Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhirī (456 AH) and Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shawkānī (1250 AH) who both deemed blind acceptance to be unlawful. Rather, it is the obligation of every Muslim seeking to know the injunctions of Allah and His messenger ﷺ to consult only those reports that have been rigorously authenticated (ṣaḥīḥ), especially since the founders of the surviving legal schools expressly directed their students to always follow the words of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in contradistinction to their own views.

Both the declaration that the practices and beliefs of many Sufis are heretical or even blasphemous as well as the call to throw off the shackles of blind acceptance in jurisprudence were plenty to

stir up the ire of scholars worldwide, who placed so much value on both Sufism and adherence to the Four Schools. That notwithstanding, different scholars have undertaken the task of rebutting a number of Al-Albānī's claims concerning particulars of religious praxis and doctrine. Hence, we have the work of the present author who effectively underscores how Al-Albānī incorrectly declared the hadith proofs for the validity of using *dhikr* beads to be unreliable as evidence. Shaykh Mamdūḥ exposes the flaws in Al-Albani's research and reasoning. He also reveals how his views contravene that of the overwhelming majority of scholars throughout Islamic history, including many of those who Al-Albānī himself admired and emulated in a number of areas, like Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, and Imam 'Alī al-Shawkānī.

Since the last decade of the 20th century, English speaking Muslims in the West have had to contend with the rise of Salafism and the havoc wrought upon them by the misguided sincerity of readers of the works of Shaykh Al-Albānī about the use of *dhikr* beads among other things. The views of this faction have held many people captive, especially in light of the lack of cogent responses to their claims authored by qualified scholars. Approximately, ten years have passed since I first read Shaykh Mamdūḥ's rebuttal to Shaykh Al-Albānī, and about seven years since I completed my first draft of its translation, after which I

contacted the author and received his blessing to proceed with its publication. My prayer is that this treatise can be read objectively by both opponents and defenders of Shaykh Al-Albānī. May Allah bring benefit by it, use it to heal our hearts, and multiply the reward of its author and translator.

Abdullāh bin Ḥamīd ʿAlī

San Leandro, CA

TRANSLITERATION KEY FOR SPECIAL CHARACTERS

ء (ˈ ʾ) ʿ (To indicate a slight catch in the breath. Also to signify that *hamza* has been dropped from the beginning or the end of a word)

آ Ā ā (extended *a* sound as in the word *cat*)

~ Ī ī (elongated *i* sound as in the word *ski*)

ت T t

ث Th th (Pronounced like *th* in the word *think*)

ح Ḥ ḥ (A tensely breathed *h* sound originating from the middle of the throat)

خ Kh kh (Pronounced like the Scottish *ch* in *loch* with hollowed mouth to produced full sound)

د D d

ذ Dh dh (Pronounced like *th* in the word *this*)

ر R r (Pronounced like Spanish *r* with a roll of the tongue)

ز Z z

س S s

ش Sh sh (Pronounced like *sh* in *shoe*)

ص Ṣ ṣ (A heavy *s* sound pronounced from the far back of a hollowed mouth to produce a full sound)

ض Ḍ ḍ (Pronounced from far back in the mouth to produce hollowed sound. Corresponds to a heavy *d/dh* with gentle bite on one of both sides of tongue)

ط Ṭ ṭ (Heavy *t* sound pronounced with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound)

ظ Ẓ ẓ (Heavy *z* or *th* as in the word *this* pronounced with a hollowed mouth to produce full sound)

ع ', 'a, 'i, 'u (Pronounced from mid-throat. A swift and slight interruption of air or strain in one's throat is needed for proper pronunciation)

غ Gh gh (Pronounced like a throaty French *r* with hollow mouth to produce full sound)

ق Q q (A guttural *q* sound with the mouth hollowed to produce full sound)

ك K k

ه H h

و W w; Ū ū (elongated *u* sound as in the word *blue*)

ي Ay ay (Composite *ay* sound as in the word *play*)

About the Author

The author of this superbly composed work is Maḥmūd Sa'īd Muḥammad Mamdūḥ. Shaykh Mamdūḥ was born in Cairo, Egypt in the year 1952 and obtained his degree of higher learning (Phd) from Azhar University. He later traveled to the holy city of Mecca, the Ennobled, to further his studies with the local scholars. He studied the jurisprudence of the school of Imam Shafi'i, ArAbīc, the Prophet's biography, the Qur'anic sciences, legal maxims, hadith, and other disciplines.

Among his shaykhs are:

1- The renowned hadith scholar (muḥaddith) of Morocco, 'Abd Allāh b. Al-Siddīq Al-Ghumārī
2- Shaykh 'Abd Allāh's sibling, 'Abd Al-'Azīz b. Al-Siddīq Al-Ghumārī, who was also a renowned hadith scholar
3- The Most Learned, Muḥammad Al-Fādānī
4- The Most Learned, Shaykh Muḥammad Najīb Al-Maṭī'ī
5- The Most Learned, Shaykh Ismā'īl 'Uthmān Al-Yamānī

Shaykh Mamdūḥ also studied with many other shaykhs and scholars whose number exceeds 50. Additionally, he has written more than 30 books, most of which have been published. Among the titles are:

1- *Al-Ta'rīf bi awhāmi man qassama al-Sunnata ilā ṣaḥīḥ wa da'īf* [7 volumes], or 'Identifying the Misgivings of those who have divided the Sunna into merely Ṣaḥīḥ and Da'īf.'

2- *Al-Iḥtifāl bi ma'rifati al-ruwāti al-thiqāti alladhīna laysu fī Tahdhīb al-kamāl* [4 volumes], or 'Celebrating the Knowledge of The Reliable Transmitters Who are not in *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*.'

3- *Tanbīh al-Muslim ilā ta'addī Al-Albānī 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, or 'Alerting the Muslim to Al-Albānī's Transgression Against the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim.'

4- *Wuṣūl at-Tahānī bi ithbāti sunniyyati al-subḥati wal-raddu 'alā Al-Albānī*, or 'Achieving Enjoyment by Establishing that Dhikr Beads are Sunna and the Rebuttal of Al-Albānī.'

5- *Raf'ū al-Minārati bi takhrīji ahādīthi al-tawassuli wal-ziyārati*, or 'Raising the Minaret by Substantiating the Hadiths Related to Tawassul and the Visit of the Prophet's Grave.'

6- *Kashfu al-sutūr 'ammā ashkala min aḥkāmi al-qubūr*, or 'Removing the Shades from What is Problematic of the Rulings Related to Graves.'

7- *Tashnīf al-asmā' bi shuyūkhi al-ijazāti wal-samā'*, or 'Adorning the Names with the Shaykhs of Ijāza and Samā'.'

8- *Ghāyatu al-tabjīl wa tark al-qat' fī al-tafḍīl*, or 'The Height of Respectful Praise and the Abāndonment of Certainty About Who is of the Highest Virtue [From the Companions].'

The Sunna of Dhikr Beads in Response to Shaykh Al-Albānī

By Shaykh Maḥmūd Sa'īd Mamdūḥ

[Author's Introduction]

With the name of Allah, The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah, Exalted in Highness. We praise Him seeking His assistance, forgiveness, and guidance. We take refuge with Him from the evils of our souls, and the repercussions of our misdeeds. Whomever Allah guides, there are none who can misguide him. And whomever He misleads, there are none who can guide him. I testify that there is no deity other than Allah, alone who has no partners. And I bear witness that our master Muḥammad is His slave and messenger. O Allah! Forgive him, grant him peace, and bless him, and do the same for his pure family, companions, and their successors. I have become acquainted with what Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir Al-Albānī wrote with regard to the *dhikr* beads, and his ruling that it is a *bid'a*[1]. This ruling is objectionable, and you will see with your own eyes that I am not imparting anything false. On the contrary, [you will see that] I am speaking the truth, if Allah so wills. I found that he ruled against the venerable prophetic traditions (hadiths) in a

[1] Author's Note: [*Al-silsila Al-da'ifa*: 1/95-100]

fashion that is not permissible in the view of the scholars of hadith. He attributed weakness to sound reports (ṣaḥīḥ), declared weak reports to be fair in grade, and presented weak traditions attributed to the Sahabā as authoritative evidence. Rather, he did not give the topic its due research and scrutiny as relates to the actions of the *Saḥāba*. He judged what they did as an illicit innovation (bid'a)[2], among other things, as you will see, if Allah, Exalted in highness, so wills. I entitled this work *Achieving Enjoyment by Establishing that the Use of Dhikr Beads is a Sunna and the Rebuttal against Al-Albānī.* I was hoping not to write about this subject. However, some people lacking knowledge of hadith and other things who accept that [the use of] *dhikr* beads is a *bid'a* pushed me to write about it. They forbid people against blind uncritical imitation of qualified scholarship (taqlid), and they speak [negatively] about Allah's righteous slaves, while they are the most vehement of those engaged in blind imitation.[3] They follow this unsanctioned, rejected view, and severely rebuke the slaves of Allah who utilize the *subha*[4] to keep an accurate count

---

[2] Translator's note: Saying that the use of dhikr beads is an innovation would mean that the Sahabā are guilty of innovating in the religion. That's because the reports that will be mentioned portraying their use of pebbles, date-pits, and the like are considered to be sound (ṣaḥīḥ) by traditional authorities of the past and present. Shaykh Al-Albānī on the other hand, has declared these reports to be weak, and has used that belief, as a basis for declaring the use of *dhikr* beads to be an innovation. And many who follow him today have done the same.

[3] One of them composed a treatise about the rulings related to the masjid. He mentioned in it that "...amongst the illicit innovations [practiced] in masjids is the use of the *subḥa* for dhikr" – [this objection is] in agreement with [the view of] Shaykh Al-Albānī. And this treatise has circulated amongst the common folk—despite all of its errors.

[4] Translator's note: The *subḥa* is the Arabic word for 'dhikr beads.' All references to *dhikr* beads from here on will be substituted by the word 'subḥa.' So take note.

of the times they mention Allah's name, Exalted in Highness. Then, they obstruct, act harshly, and severely rebuke [those who use it]. Some of them even set out with the strict purpose of severing the strings which connect the beads used for divine glorification. We ask Allah for safety and remoteness from such ignorance! In light of this, I composed this work as a word of advice to them since they are our brothers. And they undoubtedly have a right over us. Allah, Exalted in highness, says:

و ذكر فإن الذكرى تنفع المؤمنين

"And remind, for surely the reminder benefits the believers."[5]

I hope that those who read it will review it with an impartial eye, and avoid fanatical tribal bias (ta'aṣṣub) and inconsiderateness (i'tisāf). O Allah! Upon You we have depended, and to You we have turned. And there is neither might nor power except by Allah, The Exalted, The Great.

[5] Qur'ān 51:55

"What a wonderful reminder the subḥa is."

After first acknowledging the virtue of the predecessors—due to our indebtedness to them—let me then say that a number of our most popular scholars have written about the *subḥa*. Among them are:

- *Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī.* His treatise is published in the second part of *Al-Ḥāwī* under the title *Al-Minḥa fī al-Subḥa* (The License to Use Dhikr Beads).
- *Al-'Allāma Muḥammad b. 'Allān Siddīqī,* who died in the year 1057 AH. He entitled it *Īqād al-Maṣābīḥ li mashrū'iyat ittikhādh al-masābīḥ* (Igniting the Lamps for the Legitimacy of Using Dhikr Beads) in his commentary on *Al-Adhkār* (Spiritual Utterances) [1/252]. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find it.
- *Al-'Allāma Abū al-Ḥasanāt Muḥammad 'Abd Al-Ḥayy Laknawī* [has a work that is] in one part. He entitled it *Nuzhat al-Fikr fī Subḥat al-Dhikr* (The Mind's Stroll in the Beads of Dhikr). I found it published in India.

Suyūṭī and Laknawī—may Allah have mercy on both of them—did not speak about the chains of narrations in a manner that is useful. They merely mentioned a number of ascriptions[6]. This [is the case], while the virtuous Shaykh 'Abd Allāh Al-Hararī has also rebutted what Al-Albānī wrote about the *subha* in a two volume work. However, there is severe weakness and many hadith errors in his rebuttal. That notwithstanding, he did comment well to an extent about the first hadith:

نعم المذكر السبحة

"What a wonderful reminder the *subha* is."

For that reason, I will not comment on it. What I will do by Allah's help is offer my rebuttal according to the forthcoming format and style.

[6] Tranlator: If something is just an ascription, like for one to say *'it was said about him' 'it was mentioned,' 'it was related,'* this is usually taken to indicate that a hadith is weak unless the contrary is clarified. So this would give the impression that there is nothing strong relating to the topic. But the opposite is true as will be clarified.

Section 1

Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī said after some preliminary remarks, the verbatim of which is:

> "All that has been related in that regard are two hadiths that Suyūṭī conveyed in his aforementioned treatise. So, I am compelled to mention them and clarify their weaknesses:
>
> First: On the authority of Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās [it is reported] that he and Allah's messenger ﷺ came upon a woman, and lying in front of her were date pits or pebbles she was using to glorify Allah. He (The Prophet ﷺ) said,
>
> "I'll inform you of what is lighter upon you than this and better."
>
> He said,
>
> سبحان الله عدد ما خلق في السماء
>
> "Subḥān Allāhu 'adada mā khalaqa fī al-Samā'...(Glory be to Allah equal the number of times of all that He created in Heaven...)"...until the end of the hadith.

Abū Dāwūd [1/230], Tirmidhī [4/277-278], Dūwraqī in the *Musnad* of Sa'd [130/1], Mukhliṣ [9/17/2], and Ḥākim [1/547-548] reported it by way of 'Amr b. Al-Ḥārith that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl related it from Khuzayma from 'Āisha b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās on the authority of her father. Tirmidhī said, "[It is] a fair hadith (hadith ḥasan)."Ḥākim said, "It has a sound chain (ṣaḥīḥ al-isnād)". And Dhahabī errantly concurred with him in light of the fact that this Khuzayma is unknown (majhūl). Dhahabī said himself in *Al-Mīzān*, "Khuzayma is unknown." Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl single-handedly reports on his authority. Ḥāfiẓ[7] likewise said in *Taqrīb*, "He is not known."And despite Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl's moral rectitude, Sājī related [about him] from Aḥmad that he used to mix up hadiths (ikhtalaṭa). So, how can the hadith be characterized by soundness (siḥḥa) or fairness (ḥusn)?"

[End of Al-Albānī's remarks]

* * *

[7] Translator's note: He is Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajr Al-'Asqalānī in his book *Taqrīb at-Tahdhīb*.

My response to this is—while success (tawfīq), aid, and correctness (sadād) are from Allah—that Al-Albānī attributed the hadith to a group [of hadith scholars]. Then, [he attributed it] to Ḥākim by way of 'Amr b. Al-Ḥārith that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl related it from Khuzayma...etc. I say that there is no mention of Khuzayma in *Mustadrak*[8] at all. Rather, what is [actually] in *Mustadrak* is the version of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl from 'Aisha *directly* with no medium. It is also [reported] that way in *Talkhis al-Mustadrak* of Dhahabī who concurred with Ḥākim with regard to grading the hadith as being sound (ṣaḥīḥ). So, Al-Albānī unrightfully declared him to be mistaken. It is as if he is redressing Dhahabī when saying, "Because this Khuzayma is unknown. Dhahabī says himself in *Al-Mīzān*: "He is not known.""[End of quote]

So, look at what this suggests and judge it in whatever way you like.[9] Then, know the following, my brethren: Ḥākim said in *Mustadrak*,

> "Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad Al-Jurjānī declared to us—Muḥammad b. Al-Ḥasan b. Qutayba Al-'Asqalānī declared to us—Ḥarmala b. Yaḥyā declared

[8] Translator's note: This is Ḥākim's book where the aforementioned hadith is located supposedly.
[9] Translator's note: Shaykh Mamdūḥ is implying that Shaykh Al-Albānī intentionally mixed up the chains of narration of the hadith by replacing the narration in *Mustadrak* with the narration mentioning Khuzayma so that his opinion that the hadith is weak could be accepted.

> to us—Ibn Wahb informed us— 'Amr b. Al-Ḥārith told me that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl related to him from 'Āisha b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās, that he and Allah's messenger ﷺ came upon of a woman..." to the end of the hadith.

Ḥākim graded it as sound (ṣaḥīḥ), and Dhahabī concurred with him. Look at *Mustadrak* [1/547]. It also has a *mutāba'a*[10] (supporting chain) in [the collection of] Ibn Ḥibbān. Al-Albānī didn't mention it, despite the fact that Suyūṭī ascribed it to Ibn Ḥibbān in *Al-Minḥa.*[11]

Ibn Ḥibbān states,

> "'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Salam told us—Ḥarmala b. Yaḥyā declared to us—Ibn Wahb declared to us—'Amr b. Al-Ḥārith told me that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl declared to him from 'Āisha b. Sa'd by way of him (i.e. her father)."

[Adapted from] *Mawārid Al-Ẓam'ān*[12]: p. [579]. This is a sound chain. There is no doubt about its soundness. 'Abd Allāh b. Salam

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[10] Translator's note: A *mutāba'a* is a technical term used to refer to the additional narrations of one particular hadith, which strengthens the soundness or authenticity of the first version. The wording of the *mutAbā'a* is identical or almost identical to the first. When the additional narration only conveys a meaning similar to the first version but is a completely different report, it is called a *shāhid.*

[11] Translator's note: Again, Shaykh Mamdūḥ suggests that Al-Albānī intentionally omitted a sound narration of the hadith just to strengthen his own argument, and to make people believe that there is no evidence supporting the permissibility of using dhikr beads.

[12] Translator's note: The title translates as *'The Watering Troughs of The Thirsty.'*

is reliable (*thiqa*).[13] Look at *Siyar A'lām Al-Nubalā'*[14] [14/306] and *Al-Ansāb*[15] [B/426]. Ḥarmala and his shaykh, Ibn Wahb, are also two reliable imams. 'Amr b. Al-Ḥārith is also. As for Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl, he is reliable. The Group (*Al-Jamā'a*)[16] has reported [his hadiths]. He was born in Egypt in the year 70 AH, and he grew up in Medinah. Then, he returned to Egypt during the caliphate of Hishām [b. 'Abd Al-Malik] and died as it is related in *Thiqāt* [6/374]. Look at *Tahdhīb* [4/94] [where the author says], "'Āisha b. Sa'd is also a reliable Medinite *tābi'ī* woman. The people of Medinah report on her authority. She died in the year 117 a.h." (End of Ibn Ḥajar's quote from *Tahdhīb* [12/436])

So, the chain is sound (ṣaḥīḥ). Bazzar expressly mentioned in his *Musnad* the version of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl from 'Āisha b. Sa'd. He also mentioned two of her hadiths. One of them is the hadith that makes mention of doing *tasbīḥ* (glorification) with date pits that

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[13] Translator's note: When it is said that a narrator is *thiqa* (reliable), it means that he/she is characterized by both attributes that are essential for a transmitter in the chain of a sound (ṣaḥīḥ) hadith. Those two characteristics are: 1) Strong Retention Capacity (*Ḍabṭ*) and 2) Behavioral Integrity (*'Adāla*). The first characteristic, *Ḍabṭ*, generally means for the transmitter to have so excellent of a memory to the point that he almost never misquotes a person even if a considerable period of time has passed by. The second characteristic, *'Adāla*, means that the transmitter is one who is not known to commit major sins, and that if he/she happens to commit a minor sin, it is not something that is repeated.

[14] Translator's note: This is the work of Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī (748 a.h.), which translates as *'The Biographies of The Noble Chief Personalities.'*

[15] Translator's note: This book translates as *'Lineages.'*

[16] Translator's note: The group or *Al-Jamā'a* among the scholars of hadith is used to refer to the six most authoritative hadith compilers. They are Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and Nasā'ī.

Al-Albānī attributed weakness to. Look at *Musnad Al-Bazzār* (1/134/1).

[The hadith] also has a *shahid*[17] whose chain stops at 'Umar. Ibn Abī Shayba mentioned it in *Muṣannaf* [2/391]. And this alone is sufficient to take apart and demolish all that Al-Albānī has written. And, here, we ask our brethren who launch the accusations of *bid'a* and exceed all bounds, why do you blindly follow Al-Albānī? It would have been more appropriate for you to accept the statements of the Imams, the specialists in this field. [And in the words of the poet]:

فاعن به و لا تخض بالظن و لاتقلد غير أهل الفن

So show concern for it but indulge not with doubt
And follow no other than the people of the art

Had you been critical, you would have looked [closely] at the different narrations (ṭuruq) and their chains of transmission. Then, the truth would have been clear. So, we ask Allah's forgiveness for anything that has issued from us unexpectedly. Surely, He forgives incessantly.

[17] Translator's note: When the additional narration only conveys a meaning similar to the first version but is a completely different hadith (sanad & matn), it is called a *shāhid*.

Section: 2

[As already stated] Al-Albānī ascribed weakness to the hadith of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl when he said,

> "And despite Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl's moral rectitude Saji related [about him] from Aḥmad that he used to mix up hadiths (ikhtalaṭa). So, how can the hadith be characterized by soundness (siḥḥa) or fairness (ḥusn)?"(End of Al-Albānī's remarks).

[If one were to use such a claim as an argument] I would respond by saying that Abū Ḥātim, Dāraquṭnī, Al-'Ijlī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others declared Sa'īd to be reliable. And The Group (*Al-Jamā'a*) use him as an authority (ḥujja).

On this premise—and the fact that he is presented as a reliable authority in the *Two Ṣaḥīḥs*[18]—there is enough in order to declare his hadith to be *ṣaḥīḥ,* as Bukhārī and Muslim have done. As for devaluating him without evidence, such an act is unbefitting the work of one who is learned (muṭṭali'). So, one who does this makes it known to the public—to his own detriment—that he lacks knowledge. On the other hand, who of the transmitters has escaped criticism? This is more than just rare. Rather, the Shaykh of the craft, Imam Bukhārī, was also criticized unjustly. It would have

[18] Translator's note: The *Two Ṣaḥīḥs* are the hadith collections of Bukhārī and Muslim.

been enough for him (i.e. Al-Albānī) to refer back to the introduction of *Fatḥ*[19], instead of darkening paper with comments about the trustworthy slaves of Allah. Ḥāfiẓ (Ibn Ḥajar) said [p.406], "Sājī went against the majority (shadhdha), and mentioned him amongst the weak transmitters (du'afā')." He also said [p.462], "Sājī mentioned him [in a negative context] without proof. And it has not been verified that Aḥmad declared him to be weak." [End of quote]

Therefore, it becomes clear that the narration of Sājī on the authority of Aḥmad [concerning the weakness of Sa'īd] is not sound (ṣaḥīḥ). If it had been sound, it still would not be accepted, because Bukhārī and Muslim both reported [hadiths] in Sa'īd's favor in the major hadith canons (al-uṣūl). So, the weakening of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl has not been confirmed by anyone. For that reason, Ḥāfiẓ Al-Mutqin, the grandson of Ibn Al-'Ajamī, did not mention him in his book, *Al-Ightibāṭ bi man rumiya bil Ikhṭilāṭ*[20], nor did Ibn Al-Kaiyāl in *Al-Kawākib Al-Naiyirāt*[21]. The rule, according to the scholars of hadith—may Allah reward them with good—is that the declaration that a transmitter is reliable is placed over the declaration that one is unreliable whenever the latter is

[19] Translator's note: That is, *Fatḥ al-Bārī* of Ibn Ḥajar Al-'Asqalānī.
[20] Translator's note: This title translates as *'Jealousy over those who have been accused of Confusing Hadiths.'*
[21] Translator's note: This translates as *'The Brilliant Stars.'*

not explained.[22] By this, the error of Al-Albānī in his claim that the reliable [narrator] (thiqa) Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl[23] confused hadiths should now be obvious to you. In fact, it is a rejected claim. Al-Albānī wanted to give the general masses the impression that Sa'īd's hadith is neither sound (ṣaḥīḥ) nor fair (ḥasan), so that his opinion about the weakness of the aforementioned hadith would be accepted.

Section: 3

One misinformed writer objected to the chain of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl from 'Āisha b. Sa'd wherein Khuzayma is not found on the premise that Khuzayma is omitted from it, and that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl does not report [hadiths] on the authority of 'Āisha. The proof [they use] is that Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] in *Tahdhīb* did not mention him amongst those who narrate on the authority of 'Āisha.

In Response to the First Objection:

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[22] Translator's note: What this means is that when one hadith specialist declares a narrator or hadith to be weak and another declares him/it to be reliable, then the one who declared him/it to be weak must clarify the inherent weakness.

[23] Al-Albānī went about weakening Sa'īd ibn Abī Hilāl in his books. Have a look at, for example, his *Ṣaḥīḥa* [1/137, 4/23], *Irwā'* [3/254], and his rebuttal against Shaykh Al-Būṭī [p. 10]. So, it is his obligation to change his comments about Sa'īd ibn Abī Hilāl. Otherwise, let him say what his proof is in declaring him to be weak after the solitariness of Sājī's report about Aḥmad has been established? Translator's note: These words of Shaykh Mamdūḥ were issued during the lifetime of Shaykh Al-Albānī. So Shaykh Al-Albānī would obviously not be able to respond to his request.

[--- Khuzayma is omitted. And, Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl does not report on the authority of 'Āisha ----]

This is a serious claim without evidence. The burden of proof rests on the claimant. But it is utterly impossible to find such proof! [Additionally], in the Sunna, there are a number of narrations similar to this one [related] with *nuzūl* and *'uluw*.[24] In such a case, it would mean that Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl would narrate from Khuzayma sometimes, and other times from 'Aisha without a medium. Hence, as long as the narrator is reliable (*thiqa*) and has clearly and verifiably met 'Āisha—keeping in mind that she was so famous a narrator that it is mentioned that she is the only woman on whose authority Mālik narrated hadiths; a thing solidifying her fame and extensive narration—consequently, the narration of the reliable narrator (thiqa), Sa'id, who narrates much on her authority is verified. Only a presumptuous person would reject it. For this reason, a group of the *Ḥuffāẓ*[25] declared this chain

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[24] Translator's note: The hadith characterized by *nuzūl* (lit. descent) is one that contains a long list of narrators. To be characterized by *'uluw* (lit. highness/ or ascent) is for a hadith to contain a few number of people in its chain. The second classification is considered to be stronger than the first. That is, the more people found in the chain of one hadith, the more it increases in weakness according to hadith specialists. For this reason, we find the great Imams of the Sunna and Hadith seeking out the second type of hadith (i.e. *'āli*). They would many times travel far distances in order to get a hadith first hand from those who heard it directly from the Prophet ﷺ or directly from one of his companions. For this reason, hadiths found in the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik are stronger than those same hadiths reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imam Bukhārī, since the chain of Mālik is shorter.

[25] Translator's note: '*Ḥuffāẓ*' is the plural of the word "*Ḥāfiẓ*." It is the most prestigious title that a hadith scholar can be awarded. A number of scholars apply the designation to the most masterful of hadith scholars who grasp more about the reports and its transmitters than they lack, while others incline toward circumscribing the number of hadiths required for memorization before one is

to be sound, one of whom is Dhahabī. So, the chain is connected (muṭṭaṣil)[26], if Allah has willed thus, according to the opinion (madhhab) of those who stipulate an encounter [between the narrator and the transmitter, like Bukhārī] as well as those who don't make that a condition [like Muslim].[27]

In Response to the Second Objection:

[----Ḥāfiẓ (Ibn Ḥajar) in *Tahdhīb* did not mention him (Sa'īd) amongst those who narrate on the authority of 'Āisha----]

This is a feeble objection. However, I will respond to it so that it does not cause confusion for others who similarly object. Ḥāfiẓ said in the introduction to *Tahdhīb* [1/3],

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worthy of this designation. Some stipulate that the number of hadiths memorized must be in the hundreds of thousands, while others allow for lower numbers in the tens of thousands. A median viewpoint posits that the term, hafiz, is time and circumstance specific (Al-Ṣāliḥ, Ṣubḥī. *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Muṣṭalaḥuhu. Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn*, 1995, pp. 75-80). Imam Bukhārī said:

"I've memorized 100,000 sound (ṣaḥīḥ) hadiths, and 200, 000 weak (da'īf) hadiths."

حفظت مائة ألف حديث صحيح و مائتي ألف حديث غير صحيح

It is said that Imam Aḥmad memorized 1,000,000 (one million) hadiths. 'Ḥāfiẓ' is also used to refer to one who has completed the memorization of the Qur'ān. However, when found mentioned next to the name of a scholar, the first meaning is intended.

[26] Translator's note: Connectedness (iṭṭiṣāl) is one of the major factors taken into account in order to establish the soundness (ṣiḥḥa) of a hadith. However, this is not sufficient enough to establish that a hadith is ṣaḥīḥ. Nevertheless, since the objective of the author is simply to refute the argument of the one who claims that the aforementioned chain is not connected, he merely deals with this difficulty.

[27] Translator's note: In other words, the hadith fulfills the conditions set by both Bukhārī and Muslim regarding soundness. That's because the former stipulates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that there must be a verified encounter between the narrator and transmitter in order to ascertain the soundness of a particular report. As for Imam Muslim, that's not a condition. The transmitter merely has to be a contemporary of the narrator. That is, there has to be the possibility that the two people met only.

> "Then, the Shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him—i.e. Al-Mizzī—set out to list all of the shaykhs of the person whose biography is under discussion and to list all of his transmitters. He arranged them in alphabetical order under every biography. He achieved that aim in most cases. But, it is an aim that cannot be fully accomplished..."[28]

In addition, the narration of Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl from 'Āisha is neither found in *The Six Books* nor the [other] works of their authors. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Al-Ḥajjāj Al-Mizzī, may Allah, have mercy on him, is foremost [in this science]. Rather, everything he mentions in the biography relates merely to the narrators found in the *Six Books*. He did not take care to mention more than those [narrators], as is known from referring back to his *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, for he, may Allah have mercy on him, placed a [distinguishing] mark over the place where every narrator narrated from his shaykh in the aforementioned books, and maintained this pattern. Therefore, this is the pattern [set] in his book. Then, after the soundness (ṣiḥḥa) of the hadith of Sa'd has become clear from one chain of transmission, and fair (ḥasan) from another chain of

[28] Translator's note: The point from this citation is that it was not the intent of the author, al-Mizzī, to exhaust mention of all the known transmitters. Furthermore, such a goal would be unachievable in light of the fact that it is practically impossible for a single scholar to encompass knowledge of every person who ever related a hadith. Hence, the omission of a single transmitter like, Sa'īd b. Abī Hilāl, is neither proof of his non-existence nor a reason to declare him to be a weak narrator if his existence is acknowledged.

transmission—a result of the work of the precise *Ḥuffāẓ*—you know the value of the statement of Al-Albānī [when he says]:

"Then, how can the hadith be declared sound or fair?"

Glorifying with Four Thousand Datepits

Section: 4

Then Al-Albānī said,

> "The Second [hadith is]: On the authority of Ṣafiya. She said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stumbled upon me while in front of me were four thousand date pits I use to glorify [Allah]. So, he said, "O daughter of Ḥuyay! What is this?" I said, "I glorify [Allah] with them." He said, "I have already glorified while standing over your head more [times] than this." I said, "Teach me [to do the same], O Messenger of Allah ﷺ!" He said, "Say: Glory to Allah equal to the number of all He has created."
>
> قولي سبحان الله عدد ما خلق من شيء
>
> Tirmidhī [4/274], Abū Bakr Al-Shāfi'ī in *Al-Fawā'id* [73/255/1], and Ḥākim [1/547] reported it by way of Hāshim b. Sa'īd on the authority of Kināna, the client of Ṣafiya, from her. Tirmidhī weakened it saying:

"This is a *gharīb*[29] hadith. We only know it from this chain from the hadith of Hāshim b. Sa'īd Al-Kūfī. And its chain is not known. There is [another narration] related to the subject on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās."

As for Ḥākim, he said: "It has a sound chain (ṣaḥīḥ al-isnād)." And Dhahabī concurred with him. Butthis—coming from him—is astonishing! About this [same] Hāshim b. Sa'īd, he said in *Mīzān*: "Ibn Ma'īn said: "He's nothing." Ibn 'Adī said: "The extent of what he relates cannot be strengthened by another narration (la yutāba'u 'alayhi)." For this reason, Ḥāfiẓ said in *Taqrīb*: "[He is] Weak." And the term used for this is *majhūl al-ḥāl* (of unknown character status). No one exonerated him except Ibn Ḥibbān." [End of Al-Albānī's words]

* * *

I say: These remarks are subject to a number of objections. The first pertains to the remark about Kināna, the client of Ṣafiya where he (i.e. Al-Albānī) said, "This [person] is of unknown status. No one exonerated him except Ibn Ḥibbān."

[29] Translator's note: A *gharīb* hadith is one that has been related by only one narrator. It can be weak or sound. That all depends on the strength of the narrator and other matters that have been expounded upon in the books related to the science of hadith methodology.

I say: [As for] Kināna, six have narrated [hadiths] on his authority: Zuhayr and Hudayj—the sons of Mu'āwiya, Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥa, Hāshim b. Sa'īd Al-Kūfī, Sa'd b. Bishr Al-Jawhanī, and Yazīd b. Al-Mughallas Al-Bāhilī. Ibn Ḥibbān exonerated him, and Al-Azdī ascribed weakness to him. As for Abū Al-Fatḥ's ascription of weakness to him, it is rejected, as is known in the circles of hadith scholars.[30] But, Ibn Ḥibbān's vindication (*tawthīq*) is acceptable. Ḥāfiẓ also said in *Taqrīb*, "[He is] acceptable (maqbūl)." Then, he rejected Al-Azdī's claim of weakness, and said, "Al-Azdī labeled him as weak without proof." [End of quote]

Look at *Tahdhīb* [8/449], *Tārīkh Al-Kabīr* [4/1/237], *Thiqāt* [5/339], and *Taqrīb* [2/137].

So, if it is said: "the statement of Ḥāfiẓ in *Taqrīb*: "[He is] acceptable (maqbūl)" means "when supported by a different chain ('inda al-mutāba'a)," I would reply that it is definitely acceptable, because it *has* been corroborated [by another] as will be shown *in the coming pages*. As for the statement of Dhahabī in *Kāshif* [3/11]: "He was declared trustworthy (wuththiqa)", it does not mean that this vindication has been contested (*taḍ'īf al-tawthīq*).

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[30] Ḥāfiẓ, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "No faith is to be placed in the statement of Al-Azdī, because *he* is weak." Taken from the introduction of *Al-Fatḥ*: p. [386]. And look at pages 390, 392, 393, 394, 395, and 400 from the introduction.

Rather, it means that the vindication of others is stronger than his [own vindication]. And with respect to the likes of Kināna—or even lesser than him, Dhahabī holds the view that his hadith can be acted upon and advanced as proof. Dhahabī said in *Mīzān*,

> "And there are a great number of narrators of the *Two Ṣaḥīḥs* for whom we know that no one has offered a vindication. And the overwhelming majority is of the view that those among the venerable personalities (al-mashāyikh) on whose behalf a group has narrated and against whom nothing can be used as a point of objection, his hadith is presumed to be sound (ṣaḥīḥ)." [End of quote] *Mīzān* [3/426]

If not for the limitation of space, I would have produced all of the examples to which Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī alluded. But, we mention from them Ibrāhīm Al-Makhzūmī (*Intoduction to Al-Fatḥ*: p. 388), Usāma b. Ḥafṣ, and Asbāṭ Abū Al-Yasa' (*Intoduction to Al-Fath*: p. 389). And Kināna is not less [in importance] than those mentioned. Amongst the contradictions of Al-Albānī also is that he comes across[31] the likes of Kināna, and declares all of his

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[31] Rather, he comes across lesser than Kināna, the Tābi'ī, and accepts his hadith. He said in *Mukhtaṣar Al-'Ulūw* from a chain that has Ṣāliḥ b. Al-Ḍarīs:

> "And this is a chain that has nothing harmful in it. For this Salih was mentioned by Ibn Abī Ḥātim [2/1/406-407] who said,
>
> > 'Muḥammad b. Ayyūb narrated on his authority and mentioned in his regard neither any point of contention (jarḥ) nor a vindication (ta'dīl). Dhuhli also narrated on his authority.'"

hadiths to be fair (ḥasan), and then ascribes weakness to Kināna here. [In support of this claim of mine] I present to our brethren of his blind followers (muqallidihi) these two quotes from his book:

Al-Albānī said in *Irwā' al-Ghalīl* [5/21]:

> "Ṭalḥa b. 'Abd Allāh, no one vindicated him but Ibn Ḥibbān.[32] However, a group narrated on his authority, so his hadiths are fair (ḥasan al-ḥadīth), God-willing. And in *Taqrīb* [Ibn Ḥajar says]: "[He is] Acceptable (maqbūl)." [End of exact quote]

[End of quote] *Mukhtaṣar al-'Ulūw*: p. [173].

And he said in *Irwā' al-Ghalīl* [4/242]:

> "(As for) Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Al-'Abdī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim mentioned him in *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* [1/2/35], and said: 'He narrated on the authority of Abū Zayd Al-Anṣārī. 'Ali b. Al-Mubārak Al-Hanā'ī narrated on his authority.' I (Al-Albānī) say: Ismā'īl b. Muslim also narrated on his authority as you have seen, and he is Al-'Abdī, the judge. And by that [amount of information], ignorance of his physical status has been removed (irtafa'at jahālatu 'aynihi). And Ibn Ḥibban mentioned him in *Thiqāt* [4/124]. Plus, he is a Tābi'ī."

[End of quote]

[32] Look at his statement in his *Al-Ṣilsila Al-Ṣaḥīḥa* [2/64] about the vindication of Ibn Ḥibbān:

(He says)

> "And he (Ibn Ḥibbān) is careless in vindicating, and known for that. For that reason, the critical scholars (muḥaqqiqūn) don't rely upon him."

[End of quote]

[If that is the case] Then, why do you rely upon him here, O virtuous Shaykh—even though the vindication of Ibn Ḥibbān is explained in detail (fīhi tafṣīl), and to reject it absolutely would be a grave mistake?
For that reason, I mentioned that his (Ibn Ḥibbān's) vindication of Kināna, the patron of Ṣafiya, is acceptable. And the discussion of Ibn Ḥibbān's vindication [of him] requires great detail (baṣṭ). This isn't the place for it. And Allah *is Al-Musta'ān* (The One besought for help).

So why does Al-Albānī consider the hadith of Ṭalḥa fair (ḥasan), who none other than Ibn Ḥibbān have vindicated him, while he says Kināna is of unknown character status (majhūl al-ḥāl)? Moreover, you see him considering the hadith of Mālik b. Khayr Al-Ziyādī to be sound (ṣaḥīḥ), and he is like Kināna. Rather, Kināna's state is the better of the two of them (aḥsanu ḥālan minhu).[33] Then, he says in his *Ṣaḥīḥa* [2/517] after ascribing soundness to the hadith of the aforementioned Ziyādī,

> "[As for] Ziyādī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim mentioned his biography [4/1/208], and did not mention in his regard any contention or a vindication. However, a group of reliable transmitters (thiqāt) narrated on his authority. Ibn Ḥibbān vindicated him." [End of quote]

So, why does he support Ibn Ḥibbān's vindication here, and reject it there? Part of the contradiction in his aforementioned statement is his support for the silence of Ibn Abī Ḥātim [as indicative of the strength of the narrator] while you see him in other places

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[33] *Translator's note:* Apparently, the reasons that Shaykh Mamdūḥ alleges that Kināna is better than Mālik b. Khayr al-Ziyādī is: a) that Kināna was the client of the Prophet Muḥammad's wife, Ṣafiya b. Ḥuyay. Hence, his authority on the prophetic tradition is less suspect than that of Mālik b. Khayr, since the former studied with known companions of the Prophet. The second reason b) is that in spite of the fact that some scholars have declared Kināna to be a weak transmitter of hadith, there are some, like Ibn Ḥibbān, who have declared him to be reliable. As for Mālik b. Khayr, Imam Dhahabī relates the statement of Ibn Qaṭṭān that Mālik b. Khayr al-Ziyādī is "one of those whose integrity is unconfirmed." Dhahabī follows this quote by saying, "He means that no one expressly declared him to be reliable."

expressly saying that whomever Ibn Abī Ḥātim remains silent about is unknown. Then, before we move on to the second point, we have to take a pause with Shaykh Al-Albānī here. You [Shaykh Al-Albānī] said in the footnote on page [98]:

> "He—Ḥāfiz—alluded to him—i.e. Kināna—in *Taqrīb* as being feeble in hadith (layyin al-ḥadīth)", while Ḥāfiẓ said in *Taqrīb* [2/137] verbatim,
>
> > "[As for] Kināna, the client of Ṣafiya—it is said that his father's name is Nabīh—[he] is acceptable (maqbūl). Al-Azdī ascribed weakness to him without proof. He is from the third [rank of transmitters]." [End of quote]

Ḥāfiẓ made clear in the introduction the difference between *maqbūl* and *layyin* (acceptable and feeble). So the first, *maqbūl*, has a *mutābi'* (support from a different chain). Kināna has also been supported from a different chain (wa qad tūbi'a Kināna). The first condition is better than the second [which is called] *layyin* (feeble). So, what is the incentive for meddling with the words of Ḥāfiẓ? What is this called according to the scholars of hadith, O virtuous Shaykh? Is it the misrepresentation of facts or not?

The Second Objection: [As for] Hāshim b. Sa'īd, Aḥmad said about him, "I don't know him." Ibn Ma'īn said, "He is nothing." Ibn Ḥibbān mentioned him in *Thiqāt*. Abū Ḥātim ascribed weakness to him. (*Tahdhīb*: 11/17-18, *Thiqāt*: 7/585, and *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*: 4/2/104). Ibn 'Adī said after he mentioned some of his hadiths,

> "The extent of what he narrates is not corroborated by additional narrations (la yutāba'u 'alayhi)." [*Al-Kāmil*: 7/2573].

As for Ibn Ma'īn's statement that, *"He is nothing"*, its meaning may be that the narrator relates few hadiths (*qalīl al-ḥadīth*). Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] said in the introduction of *Fatḥ* (p. 421) in the biography of 'Abd Al-'Azīz b. Al-Mukhtār Al-Baṣarī: "Ibn Al-Qaṭṭān Al-Fāsī mentioned that what Ibn Ma'īn means—in some instances—when he says, "He is nothing", is that his hadiths are very few [in number]." [End of quote]

Then, Imam Aḥmad's saying that, *"I don't know him"*, does no harm to him, since others know him. Similarly, the comment of Ibn 'Adī does him no harm here because he said, "The extent of what he narrates is not corroborated by additional narrations." [End of quote]

However, a corroborating chain (mutāba'āt lahu) will be presented [later in the discussion], if Allah wills. So, the vindication of Ibn Ḥibbān and the weakening of Abū Ḥātim [are all that] remain. In light of that, the narrator is characterized with either extreme (līn) or slight weakness (da'f qarīb). Therefore, I believe that the most fair of statements about him is the statement of Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī, The Scrutinizer, who says in *Kāshif* [3/217], "He was declared to be weak (Du''ifa)." So, the aforementioned hadith of Ṣafiya would contain a slight weakness in its chain, which raises it to the grade of fair (ḥasan), because of the *mutāba'a* (support from a separate chain with the same wording) or because of the *shahid* (support from a different narration altogether but similar in meaning).

The Third Objection: The corroborating narration (shāhid) for the text is very close [in meaning]. It is the aforementioned hadith of Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās. It is a strong *shāhid* for the text [of the hadith]. So, the hadith would be *ḥasan li ghayrihi* (raised to the grade of fair (ḥasan) by a separate narration) only. And if the hadiths of Sa'd and Ṣafiya are weak, then why can't they mutually strengthen one another by each of them being made a corroborating narration (shāhid) for the other? In that case, the hadith would be fair due to extrinsic factors (ḥasan li ghayrihi). This is if we accept the opinion of Al-Albānī who declared the two

hadiths to be weak. But, he is obliged [to operate] according to this [argument I set forth] which the rules of hadith [science] dictate. Consequently, all that Al-Albānī has written about the *subḥa* falls apart. And all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

The Fourth Objection: As for Hāshim b. Sa'īd Al-Kūfī, chains that corroborate his reports do exist (faqad tūbi'a). Ṭabārānī reported something on the authority of *Rawḥ b. Al-Faraj* [that]—*'Amr b. Khālid declared to us—Ḥudayj b. Mu'āwiya declared to us—Kināna, the client of Ṣafiya, declared to us from Ṣafiya bt. Ḥuyay.* And look at the fifteenth discussion of *Amālī Al-Adhkār*. There is a photocopy of it in the library of Al-Ḥaram Al-Makkī Al-Sharīf. Rawḥ b. Al-Faraj Al-Qaṭṭān Al-Miṣrī is reliable (*thiqa*). He is one of the Mashāyikh (Shaykhs) of Ṭabārānī and Ṭaḥāwī. [*Tahdhīb*: 3/297]. 'Amr b. Khālid is reliable and steadfast (*thiqatun thabt*).[34] He is one of the transmitters sanctioned by Bukhārī. [*Tahdhīb*: 8/25]. And Ḥudayj b. Mu'āwiya, the author of *Taqrīb* [1/106] said about him, "(He is) Veracious, but makes mistakes (Ṣadūq yukhṭi')." Accordingly, this is strong reinforcement (mutāba'a) for Hāshim b. Sa'īd. So, the hadith is undoubtedly fair in grade (ḥasan). For this reason, Ḥāfiẓ declared it to be fair (ḥasan) in *Amālī Al-Adhkār* [177/1]. Is this not

[34] Translator's note: This title is given to the highest ranking of narrators the Companions (*Ṣaḥāba*).

sufficient in and of itself to demolish all that Shaykh Al-Albānī has written?

The Fifth Objection: Even if we surrender to the Shaykh that Kināna, the client of Ṣafiya, was of unknown status, he was not the only one to relate the hadith. Rather, Ṭabārānī reported in *Du'ā'* an auxiliary report (mutāba'a) for him. Ṭabārānī said in *Du'ā'*:

> "Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān b. Abī Shayba declared to us—my father declared to us, he said: "I found in my father's book written in his own hand: Mustalim b. Sa'īd declared to us from Manṣūr b. Zādhān from Yazīd—meaning ibn Mu'tib—the client of Ṣafiya b. Ḥuyay."

I maintain that the Shaykh of Ṭabārānī is a hadith master (Ḥāfiẓ). Ṣāliḥ Jazara vindicated him. Also, in his biography there is something that needs some elucidation (*taḥrīr*). In spite of it, it is unquestionably fit for auxiliary support (*mutāba'āt*).[35] Look in *Mīzān* [3/642]. His father is a reliable hadith master (*Ḥāfiẓ thiqa*),

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[35] And Al-Albānī says about him in his *Ṣaḥīḥa* [4/156]:

> "And there is a comment in his regard that does not cause his hadith to descend below the grade of fair (al-ḥusn)."

[End of quote]

However, he contradicts himself by weakening his hadith in *Irwā' al-Ghalīl* [7/107].

as is his grandfather. Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] said about Mustalim, "[He is] a veracious narrator (*ṣadūq*) who occasionally had misgivings (*rubbamā wahima*)" *Taqrīb*: [2/241]. [He also said] "...and Manṣūr is reliable (*thiqa*). The *Jamā'a*[36] relied on his narrations" (*iḥtajja bihi al-Jamā'a, Tahdhīb*: [10/306]. I could not find a biography for Yazīd on the other hand. He was a Successor (Tābi'ī). So remember what I mentioned with regard to Kināna previously,[37] and add to it the statement of Dhahabī:

> "And as for the unknown narrators, if the person is one of the imminent successors (Tābi'īn) or those of middle status[38], his hadith is tolerated and received with a good opinion if it does not contradict the versions of the major hadith canons (al-uṣūl) and is free of flimsy phrases." [End of quote] *Muqaddima al-Mughnī.*

Ṭabārānī reported it in *Al-Awsaṭ* with the same chain [2/Lām – 34/Bā']. And look in his *Du'ā* [Lām/193/Alif]. So, this is strong

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[36] Translator's note: The *Jamā'a* is a name given to the authors of the six soundest canonical collections of prophetic traditions ﷺ.

[37] Translator's note: In other words, not finding a biography for a particular narrator is not definitive proof that he/she was unreliable and untrustworthy.

[38] Translator's note: The Tābi'ī is of three types in general. (1) The Successor of high status (Al-Tābi'ī al-Kabīr): they are those who took all or most of their knowledge directly from the *Ṣaḥāba*, (2) The Successor of middle status (*al-tābi'īal-wasaṭ*): he is the one who took about half of his hadith knowledge from the Sahbā and the other half from the Successors of highest status, (3) The Successor of lowest status (*Al-Tābi'ī al-Ṣaghīr*): he is the one who took most of his knowledge of what the Prophet ﷺ said from the other Tābi'īn, and some is taken from a few of the *Ṣaḥāba*.

reinforcement (mutāba'a) for Kināna. So, is it possible to reject and weaken the hadith of Ṣafiya after this?

NOTE:

Al-Albānī said in his rebuttal against Shaykh Al-Ḥabāshī after some preliminary comments,

> "So, it is the Shaykh's duty—i.e. Al-Ḥabāshī—to cull through the texts related to this chain that corroborate the chain (mutāba'a) of Kināna, and to look to see if there is any mention of counting—i.e. the counting with date pits. If such is confirmed and is free from what cancels it from being presented as proof—as is apparent from the comment of Ḥāfiẓ—his claim has been validated. Otherwise, it is in not. Rather, it is more like trying to beat off the leaves of a Tragacanth-tree[39]." [End of Al-Albānī's comment: p. 38]

All praise is due to Allah. I have culled the words related to the hadith, and saw with my own eyes *Kitāb al-Du'ā'* of Ṭabārānī that Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] cited—may Allah reward him well. And in it date pits are mentioned. It is free of what cancels it from being presented as evidence as is apparent from the comment of Ḥāfiẓ. In addition, this reveals the negligence of Al-Albānī, who makes

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[39] Translator's note: A tragacanth-tree (*al-qatād*) is a thorny tree used as fodder for camels. It is also used in some countries of southwestern Asia to yield a gum used in pharmacy, adhesives, and textile printing. [Webster's II: New College Dictionary].

big claims. So, he should have avoided ruling on the hadith, or [he should have] emulated Ḥāfiẓ by referring to *Amālī*, which is easily accessible, except that it does not contain any mention of Ṭabārānī's chain in *Du'ā'*. Then, it was his duty to refer to *Du'ā'* by Ṭabārānī to look at the chain of the hadith, and then rule on it, while knowing that Ṭabārānī reported the same hadith, with the exact [same] chain and text, in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*. In spite of this, he (Al-Albānī) was satisfied with his opinion, and did not refer to the major hadith canons (al-uṣūl). He, likewise, did not refer to the source of *Amālī*. Thereafter, he compiled what he wrote in *Al-Silsila Al-Da'īfa*—which has been printed twice—and some people followed him—with all the errors it contains. He spoke extensively about the weakness of the hadiths of Ṣafiya and Sa'd. This is not the way of the scholars of this craft. For surely, review, precision, committing to memory whatever there is, and correcting one's errors is more appropriate than writing prolifically, as alluded to by Imam Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him, in the introduction of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* [1/46 – 47] with the commentary of Nawwawī.

"Glory be to Allah and praise equal to the number of all His creation..."

Section: 5

Furthermore, Al-Albānī said:

> "And one of the things that indicates the weakness of these two hadiths is that the story has come on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās without mentioning pebbles. To quote it reads,
>
> > "On the authority of Juwayriya, the Prophet ﷺ left her sitting where she usually would pray in the morning when he went out to pray Ṣubḥ.[40] He returned after the sun had risen, noticed that she was still sitting [there], and then said: "Are you still in the same spot I left you in?" She said: "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said: "I uttered after I left you four statements three times. If they were weighed by all that you have said today, they would equal it in weight. [I said] 'Glory be to Allah and praise equal to the number of all His creation, to the contentment of His self, to the weight of His Throne, and the ink of His words.' (Subḥān Allāhi wa bi ḥamdihi 'adada khalqihi

[40] Translator's note: *Ṣubḥ* is the proper name for the two compulsory rak'ats of the Fajr prayer.

wa riḍā nafsihi wa zinata 'arshihi wa midāda kalimātihi)."

سبحان الله و بحمده عدد خلقه و رضا نفسه و زنة عرشه و مداد كلماته

Muslim [8/83-84], Tirmidhī [4/274], Ibn Mājah [2/423] and Aḥmad [6/325, 430] reported it with Tirmidhī declaring it to be sound. So, this sound hadith points to two matters: The First is that the Companion relating the story is Juwayriya, not Ṣafiya, as is in the second hadith. The Second: is that the mention of the pebbles in the story is objectionable (munkar). 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd's finding fault with those he saw counting with pebbles supports this [understanding]. And that has been reported about him from variant chains of transmission. One of them has already been presented. So if that was something that he ﷺ affirmed, it would not have been concealed from Ibn Mas'ūd, if Allah so willed. And one of his long-time disciples received this condemnation of his. Alas, it is Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd Al-Nakha'ī, The Kufan jurisprudent. He used to forbid his daughter from helping women twist the threads of the *Tasbīḥ* that are used for glorification. Ibn Abī Shayba related it in *Al-Muṣannaf* [2/89/2] with a good (jayyid)[41] chain." [End of Al-Albānī's comments]

[41] Translator's note: A hadith is referred to as being *'jayyid'* (good) when a scholar finds difficulty determining whether to put it in the category of sound (ṣaḥīḥ) or fair (ḥasan). So *'jayyid'* is at a rank between the two.

* * *

I respond—asking Allah to grant me His grace—that these comments have points worth contending with:

The First [Contention]: is [against] his statement,

"...the companion relating the story is Juwairiya, not Ṣafiya as is in the second hadith."

You have already seen that the hadith of Ṣafiya is fair (ḥasan) and the hadith of Sa'd is sound (ṣaḥīḥ). So, the narrative was repeated once with Ṣafiya and another time with another woman and another time with Juwayriya. This happens often with regard to the occasions leading to the mention [of hadiths] [*asbāb al-wurūd*]. So, it is more appropriate to reconcile [between the variant narrations] than to reject them and to restrict [oneself] to the version of Juwayriya alone, as long as the Imams have related the chains with sound and fair grades. Thus, there is no contradiction. The employment of every proof is compulsory, as is well established [among scholars]. The most novice students of knowledge know this methodology. So, why the arbitrary passing of judgment by limiting the narrative to Juwayriya's version?

The Second (Contention):

As for ruling that the mention made of pebbles in the narrative is objectionable, it is an error on the part of Al-Albānī. It branches out from his erroneous judgment resulting from a lack of research and [not following the proper procedures of] substantiation. Rather, it is also due to the penchant for inventing rare opinions. This all leads him to declare the well-established hadiths of Sa'd and Ṣafiya to be weak.

The Third (Contention):

As for his statement, "Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd's finding fault with those he saw..." to his statement, "if Allah so willed", it contains errors that must be brought to light.

1 – Regarding the comment about Ibn Mas'ūd's finding fault with those he saw counting with pebbles, know—may Allah guide you and me to follow the truth and leave off empty claims—that this condemnation has not been verified. Later, I will mention the tradition (*athar*) that Al-Albānī relied upon to dupe the non-specialists (*al-'awāmm*), which is taken from his *Al-Silsila al-Da'īfa*: p. 96.

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ Al-Qurṭubī said in *Al-Bida' wa al-Nahyu 'Anhā*[42] [p. 12]:

> "Asad informed us from Jarīr b. Ḥāzim from Al-Ṣult b. Bahrām who said, "Ibn Mas'ūd passed by a woman who had a *Tasbīḥ* with which she was glorifying [Allah], then he cut it and threw it. He, then, passed by a man glorifying [Allah] with pebbles. So, he hit him with his foot. He, then, said: "Have you surpassed [others]? You have either unjustifiably innovated or you have surpassed the companions of Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم in knowledge."

لقد سبقتم, ركبتم بدعة ظلما, أو لقد غلبتم أصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه و سلم علما

Its chain is weak due to the break between Al-Ṣult b. Bahrām and Ibn Mas'ūd, since Ibn Bahrām, even though he was reliable (*thiqa*), was one of the Successors of the Successors (*Atbā' al-Tābi'īn*). [*Tahdhīb*: 4/432]. So, why does he use this weak Companion narrative (*al-athar al-ḍa'īf al-mawqūf*) as evidence that the use of pebbles is objectionable (munkar)? And did you see—fellow reader—how one makes the weak Companion tradition (*al-mawqūf al-ḍa'īf*) a judge over the sound reports from the Prophet (*al-marfū' al-ṣaḥīḥ*)? Let us direct our complaint to

[42] Translator's note: This translates as *'Innovations and the Prohibition against them.'*

Allah! An uncontested rule in the science of *Uṣūl* (Islamic Legal Theory) is that the actions of the Companions have no authority in face of the Sunna of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. Moreover, what do you think of the fact that a group of the Companions opposed him (Ibn Mas'ud), as shall be shown? And what would you think of the fact that this action has not [even] been truly verified from this splendid Companion? It is also common knowledge that the action of one of the Companions is not a proof against another's. So, [even] if the tradition of Ibn Mas'ūd was sound, it would never be a proof against others. And Allah knows best.

Al-Albānī also said on page 96 about the tradition of Ibn Mas'ūd, "And its chain is sound up to Al-Ṣult." In other words, its chain contains a break, i.e. a weakness. And add to the weakness of the chain the objectionable characteristic (*nakāra*) that exists in the text [of Ibn Mas'ūd's abrasiveness]. So, how could this splendid *mujtahid Companion* transgress against this woman [by destroying her property], and then hit one of the slaves of Allah with his foot? Is this the guidance of our master, Allah's messenger ﷺ? And why does he (i.e. Al-Albānī) use a weak narrative of a Companion as evidence for legal rulings when it is rejected by the (ittifāq) agreement [of the scholars]? Meanwhile, he rejects acting in accordance with weak hadiths in the area of meritorious works (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*) and the (*manāqib*) merits [of

people], even though it is also accepted by the (ittifāq) agreement [of the scholars]? What is this [arbitrariness] called?

NOTE:

Al-Albānī said on page 96 of his *Al-Silsila Al-Ḍa'īfa*,

> "Then, he—i.e. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ—related on the authority of Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh that he said: "I asked Al-Ḥasan about the *Naẓẓām*—a thread containing pearls, beads, and the like—of beads, date pits, and so forth, which are used for glorification? He said, "None of the Prophet's wives used that, and neither did the female emigrants (*muhājirāt*)." [Albānī says], "And, its chain is weak." [End of quote]

I do not know why Al-Albānī darkened pages by bringing forth this fabricated tradition that has absolutely no value, neither amongst the *shawāhid* (i.e. different narrations that agree with the aforementioned hadith in meaning, but not in word) nor the *mutāba'āt* (i.e. the other narrations that agree with the aforementioned in word, although they come from a different chain). In its chain is Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh, a confirmed liar. So, [you can] wonder a thousand times at the statement of Al-Albānī, "its chain is weak," since, there is a big difference between weak and fabricated. Biographers have mentioned a biographical

description for Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh which reveals his standing. However, I will convey what Al-Albānī related from them so that you will see his strange contradiction, and [you can] join me in wonderment at this behavior. Al-Albānī said on page 67 of his *Al-Silsila Al-Ḍa'īfa*,

> "Abān is Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh, is the Egyptian *Zāhid* (asetic). Aḥmad said: "[He is] dismissed in hadith (*matrūk al-ḥadīth*)." Shu'ba said: "For a man to fornicate is better than to narrate from Abān." I say (i.e. Al-Albānī): And it is not permitted for the like of this to be said except with regard to one who is a liar, [and is] known for that. And Shu'ba used to swear on that." [End of quote]

So, look—may Allah show you mercy—how he holds Abān here on page 67 to be a liar [who is] known for that, while he rules against his tradition on page 96 as being weak [instead of fabricated]. Rather, Abān is accused of attributing falsehood to Al-Ḥasan himself. Abū 'Awāna said,

> "Every time I heard a hadith in Basra, I retained it. Then, he related one to me—i.e. Abān—on the authority of Al-Ḥasan until I was able to collect an entire volume (muṣḥaf). Therefore, I consider it impermissible for me to relate anything on his authority." (End of quote) [*Al-Mīzān*: 1/11].

Allah is to be sought for assistance in light of this contradiction.[43] Therefore, the one who brings forth as a witness someone who has fabricated [reports] that have been proven to be fabricated in his [own] view, but by way of changing the true nature of the ruling of the chain is undoubtedly making a mockery of non-specialists (*al-'awāmm*) seeking to propagate his idea about the alleged heretical nature of the *subḥa*. Hence, does scholastic honesty necessitate this behavior? If Shaykh Al-Būṭī, Al-Ṣābūnī, or others from those whom Al-Albānī refutes would have done this act, he would have descended upon them with a thick down pour of revilements, ridicules, and other things. So, may Allah show mercy to the one who has a pious tongue and is free of bias. [As for] his statement,

> "And that has been reported about him from [different] chains (*ṭuruq*). One of them has already been mentioned, [i.e. the reported of Ibn Mas'ūd's condemnation]

I will say: As for what has already been mentioned, it has no value here, and it has become plain that it is weak. As for his statement "from [different] chains", it gives the impression that these chains are sound (ṣaḥīḥa) or fair (ḥasana), and put to use (ma'mūl bihā).

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[43] *Translator's note:* What Shaykh Mamdūḥ is calling a contradiction in this case is Al-Albānī's acknowledgement that Abān is a liar in one place, while only declaring his hadith to be weak instead of spurious in another place.

But the contrary is true. The nature of those chains will now be clarified for you.

The First [chain]: Ibn Waḍḍāḥ said in *Al-Bida' wa al-Nahyu 'anhā* [11],

> "Asad informed us on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. Rajā' from 'Ubayd b. 'Umar from Yasār Abū Al-Ḥakam that 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd reported that people in Kufa were glorifying (*yusabbiḥūna*) with pebbles in the masjid. So, he went to them finding that every man amongst them had made a pile of pebbles in front of him. He said (i.e. Al-Ḥakam): "He proceeded to pelt them with pebbles until he drove them from the masjid. He then said, "You have introduced an innovation wrongly", or "You have surpassed the companions of Muḥammad in knowledge."" [End of quote]

"Yasār" is a misspelling (*taṣḥīf*) of the copier [of the manuscript]. The correct [spelling] is *Sayār*, a *thiqa* (reliable transmitter). However, he is from the second generation of the [Companions'] successors (*atbā' al-tābi'īn*). Look at *Tahdhīb*: [4/291]. So, there is a break (*inqiṭā'*) in the chain. Add to this, the clear objectionable comment (*nakāra*) found in the text. How could a splendid Companion pelt the slaves of Allah with pebbles in the masjid,

forcing them to exit, thereby contravening the Prophet's statement ﷺ:

ما كان الرفق في شيئ إلا زانه

"Gentleness has never been in anything except that it has beautified it..."?

Muslim related it on the authority of 'Āisha. One might say, "The two aforementioned chains of the tradition of Ibn Mas'ūd—the chain of Al-Ṣult and the chain of Sayār—strengthen one another. So, the tradition (athar) becomes fair (ḥasan) in grade." The response to this would be that a break in the chain of one report cannot be mended by another with a similar break due to the singleness of the outlet (i.e. the individual that the action is being attributed to is one and the same in both chains), [44] and due to the possibility that there is more than one narrator that has been omitted in the break. So, how can something in this condition garner strength from its equivalent? Add to this the clear discrepancy between the two texts. One of them cannot gather strength from the other. In the first [narration], he passed over a woman and then a man, then severed [the strings] and hit [them].

[44] Translator's note: "the singleness of the outlet" translates from Arabic as "ittiḥād al-makhraj."

And in the second [narration], he hurled [pebbles at] the people and drove them out of the masjid...Comprehend and reflect!

The Second [chain]: Ibn Waḍḍāḥ said,

> "Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad declared to me from Ḥarmala from Ibn Wahb who said, "Ibn Sam'ān declared to me saying, "It has reached us that Ibn Mas'ūd saw some people glorifying Allah with pebbles. So he said: "Are you computing against Allah? The Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ have surpassed you in knowledge." Or [he said], "You have introduced an innovation wrongly."

لقد أحدثتم بدعة ظلما

Its chain is fabricated (*mawdu'*). Ibn Sam'an is 'Abd Allah b. Ziyad Al-Makhzumi. More than one [scholar] has declared him to be a liar, and he did not hear [anything directly] from Ibn Mas'ūd [*Tahdhīb*: 5/219]. So, all that remains is what Dārimī related about Ibn Mas'ūd. He said,

> "Al-Hakam b. Al-Mubarak told us: "'Umar b. Yaḥyā informed us [saying], "I heard my father say on the authority of his father who said: "We used to sit at the door of 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd before the Morning prayer (Ṣalāt al-Ghadā)[45]. When he would come out,

[45]Translator's note: This is another name for the Dawn Prayer (*Subh*), better known as Fajr.

we would accompany him to the mosque. [On one occasion] Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī came to us, and then said, "Has Abū 'Abd Al-Raḥmān come out yet?" We replied, "No." So, he sat down waiting for him to exit. When he finally came out, we all once stood up out of respect for him. Abū Mūsā, then, said to him, "O Abā 'Abd Al-Raḥmān! I have just seen in the mosque a matter I have never seen before (ankartuhu). That notwithstanding, I perceived in it—and all praise is due to Allah—nothing but good." He (Ibn Mas'ūd) then said, "And what was that?" He (Abū Mūsā) replied, "If your life persists, you will see it as well." He (Abū Mūsā) said, "What I saw in the mosque was people sitting in circles waiting for Ṣalāt. In each circle there was a man leading others who all held pebbles in hand. He would instruct them saying, "Say: Allah is Greatest (Allāhu Akbar) one hundred times." Then, they would say 'Allah is Greatest' one hundred times. Then, he would say, "Say: 'There is no god but Allah' (Lā ilāha illā Allāh) one hundred times." Then, they would say, 'There is no god but Allah' one hundred times. Then, he would say, "Say: 'Glory be to Allah' (Subḥān Allāh) one hundred times." Then, they would say: 'Glory be to Allah' one hundred times." Upon hearing this, he (Ibn Mas'ūd) said, "So, what did you say to them?" He (Abū Mūsā) replied, "I said nothing to them in wait of your opinion—or—in wait of your command." He (Ibn Mas'ūd) said, "You didn't order them to count their bad deeds? And [you didn't] give them an assurance that none of their good deeds would go to waste?"

After that, we all set out together until we reached one of the circles. He (Ibn Mas'ūd) stood over it, and then said, "What is this that I see you doing?" They said, "O Abā 'Abd Allah![46] They are pebbles. We use them to count the *Takbir*[47], the *Tahlil*[48], and the *Tasbih*[49]." He said, "So, count your bad deeds [as well], because I assure you that nothing of your good deeds will be wasted! Mercy on you, O nation of Muḥammad! How quick comes your demise! These, the Companions of your Prophet ﷺ are abounding in number. These are his garments. They have not yet worn out. Nor have his dining utensils been broken. By He in whose hand is my soul, you are without doubt behaving in a way (milla) that is either better than the way of Muḥammad or [your are] the opening a door to misguidance!" They responded, "By Allah, O Abā 'Abd Al-Raḥmān! We desired nothing but good." He replied, "And often it is that one who desires good never achieves it! Indeed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared to us, "Indeed, a people shall recite the Qur'an, and it will not go pass their collarbones (*taraqihim*)" And, I swear to Allah that I know not! Perhaps, most of them are amongst you!" He, then, departed." 'Amr b. Salama said, "We saw most of those participating in the circles facing us with their lances on the Day of Nahrawan along with the Khawarij." [End of quote]

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[46] This is how it appears likewise in the published copy. The correct [expression] should be: 'O 'Abdallah!' And Allah knows best.
[47] Translator's note: The *Takbir* is to say, '*Allahu Akbar*.'
[48] Translator's note: The *Tahlil* is to say '*La ilaha illa Allah*.'
[49] Translator's note: The *Tasbih* is to say '*SubhanAllah*.'

If this is verified about Ibn Mas'ūd—(as it might not be) since there is contention about Al-Hakam b. Al-Mubarak[50]— it only contains an objection to counting the number of the *Tasbih*[51]. That's because when they said, "O Abā 'Abd Al-Raḥmān![52] "O Abā 'Abd Allah![53] They are pebbles. We use them to count the *Takbir*[54], the *Tahlil*[55], and the *Tasbih"*, Ibn Mas'ūd objected only to counting [as indicated] by his statement, "Count your bad deeds [as well]...etc." However, he remained silent about the pebbles. So it contains clear, manifest proof of the permissibility of using pebbles in the *Tasbih* in Ibn Mas'ūd's view. Ibn Mas'ūd also had a dislike for counting [the *tasbih*].[56] Ibn Abī Shayba said in his

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[50] Al-Albānī mentioned in his refutation against Shaykh Al-Habāshi that the chain of Al-Dārimī, all of its narrators are reliable, [all are] narrators of Al-Bukhari in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* other than 'Umara but he is reliable (*thiqa*). But it escaped Al-Albānīthat in its chain is Al-Hakam b. Al-Mubarak. Al-Bukhari related from him in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* only. And he did not include him in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Al-Hafiz [Ibn Ḥajar Al-'Asqalani] said in *Taqrīb*: "[He is] Veracious (*Sadūq*), but might have had misgivings." Look at *Tahdhīb* [2/438], (and) *Taqrīb* [1/192].

[51] Translator's note: In this instance, *Tasbih* is being used in its broader sense meaning 'glorification of Allah's name.'

[52] Tranlator's note: Here it should read, 'O Abā 'Abd Allāh!' as the author mentioned previously in the main text to maintain consistency.

[53] This is how it appears likewise in the published copy. The correct [expression] should be: 'O 'Abd Allāh!' And Allah knows best.

[54] Translator's note: The *Takbir* is to say, '*Allāhu Akbar.*'

[55] Translator's note: The *Tahlil* is to say '*Lā ilāha illā Allāh.*'

[56] Translator's note: This conclusion by the author that Ibn Mas'ūd only objected to counting the number of times a person glorifies Allah while not objecting to the use of pebbles to do so is somewhat problematic. The reason is that if he objected to them counting the number of times they glorified Allah, then it would seem that he would naturally object to them using pebbles, since there is no other reason for a person to use pebbles than to ensure that his count is accurate in number. Perhaps, the author simply means that since 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd's dislike for the use of the pebbles is merely implicit and no soundly transmitted explicit reports have been related on his authority, then one can rightfully assume that he raised no objection to the use of pebbles for counting. For, there is no doubt that Ibn Mas'ūd was aware of the Sunna of the Prophet ﷺ of counting the number of times that one glorifies Allah after the Salat (i.e. the tasbīḥ, taḥmīd, and takbīr). And in that is sufficient basis for the validity of counting the *dhikr*. One may choose to do that with the fingers. But it may happen that one may not be able to keep track of the number. So he may have to use an implement, like pebbles or *dhikr* beads. Or perhaps Ibn Mas'ūd's objections

Mūsānnaf, "Abū Mu'awiya declared to us from Al-'Amash from Ibrāhīm. He (Ibrāhīm) said:

> "'Abd Allah [Ibn Mas'ūd] used to dislike counting. And he would say: "Can his good deeds be deemed a favor against Allah?" (End of quote) *Al-Mūsānnaf*: 2/391

أ يمن على الله حسناته؟

Its chain is sound (ṣaḥīḥ). Abū Mu'awiya is Muḥammad b. Khazim Al-Tamimi, a reliable narrator (*thiqa*) especially on the authority of Al-'Amash. Al-'Amash is also reliable even though he was guilty of subterfuge in the manner of narration (*mudallis*). He also related [hadiths] by way of '*an* [عن] ("on the authority of"). However, his narrations from Ibrāhīm are taken to indicate direct transmission (*sama'*) as Dhahabī mentioned in *Al-Mizan* [2/224].

The Fourth Objection [to Al-Albānī]:

It concerns his saying:

"And one of his long time disciples received this condemnation of his...etc."

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were to people counting the *dhikr* more than the times known to him to be reported about the Prophet ﷺ. Allah knows best.

This is an error built upon an error, since you have already seen that the condemnation of doing the *Tasbīḥ* with pebbles has not been verified about Ibn Mas'ūd. Rather, his view on the permissibility of that has been presented. As for the chain of Nakha'ī's report (athar)—may Allah have mercy on him—Ibn Abī Shayba said, "Hamid b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān declared to us from Ḥasan from Ibrāhīm b. Al-Muhājir that Ibrāhīm he used to forbid his daughter from helping women tie threads of beads that are used for glorification."

In this chain is Ibrāhīm b. Al-Muhājir about whom there is both a vindication (*Ta'dīl*) and an explanatory devaluation (*Jarḥ mufassar*). So his hadith is weak; [Have a look at] *Tahdhīb* [1/168], (and) *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* [1/1/132]. Thawrī and Aḥmad said, "There is no harm in him (lā ba'sa bihi)." Abū Dāwūd said in agreement with his shaykh, "[He is] fit for narration" (ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth). However, Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn, Ibn Ḥibbān, Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd, and Dāraquṭnī declared him to be weak. Moreover, it is the stronger of two views attributed to Nasā'ī. Shu'ba also found fault with him (ghāmazahu). Furthermore, the explanatory devaluation in his regard is the statement of Dāraquṭnī, "He related hadiths that cannot be corroborated by others (la yutābā'u 'alayha)." Abū Ḥātim Al-Rāzī said,

> "He is not strong (laysa bi al-qawī). He, Ḥusayn, and 'Atā' b. Al-Sā'ib are close to one another [in strength]. And are all veracious people (*sidq*) in our view. Their hadiths can be written but they cannot be presented independently as authority (*la yuḥtajju bihi*)."

'Abd Al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim said,

> "I said to my father: "What is the meaning of [the statement] 'their hadiths cannot be independently used as authority'?" He said, "[It means] they did not memorize. They, however, would relate hadiths they did not commit to memory. So, they would make mistakes. You see in their hadiths all sorts of contradictions." [End of quote]

And in the introduction to *Fatḥ*, p. 390, "Ibn Abī Khaythama said in his *Tārīkh*:

> "It was said to Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn: "Truthfully, Isrā'īl has related from Abū Al-Qattāt and from Ibrāhīm b. Muhājir three hundred i.e. objectionable reports (*manākīr*)." So he said, "It wasn't his fault—i.e. Isrā'īl. Rather, it was their fault." [End of quote]

So after this, can the individual narration (*tafarrud*) of Ibn Muhājir be accepted? Also [Ibn Ḥajar says] in *Taqrīb* [1/44], "(He is)

veracious (*saduq*). [He had] a bad memory (layyin al-ḥifẓ)." Dhahabī mentioned it in *Al-Mughnī* [1/27].

Once you know this, it becomes clear that the hadiths of the aforementioned Ibn Muhājir can only be improved by additional hadith support through another chain (mutābī'). As for when he is the sole transmitter (*infarada*), he is weak (da'īf). In fact, one of the contradictions of Al-Albānī is that he rejected the authentication made by Ḥākim and Dhahabī for a hadith containing the aforementioned Ibrāhīm b. Muhājir. Then he said verbatim, "Ḥākim said [of the hadith], "It has a sound chain" (ṣaḥīḥ al-isnad). Dhahabī concurred with him and added, "I say: [it] fulfills the condition of Muslim." Then Al-Albānī said, "It would be as he said if not for the fact that it contains Ibrāhīm b. Muhājir. Ḥāfiẓ (Ibn Ḥajar) said, "[He is] veracious, [but had] a weak memory." [End of quote] *Irwā' Al-Ghalīl* [5/47]

So look at Al-Albānī's rejection of the authentication [of Ḥākim and Dhahabī] saying, "...if not for the fact that in it is Ibrāhīm b. Muhājir...etc." Hence, Allah's help is sought against this contradiction which would enable the one who scrutinizes Al-Albānī's books to produce a work entitled '*Al-Albānī's Refutation of Al-Albānī.*' And ponder —brethren—the work of Al-Albānī who finds fault with Sa'īd. Abī Hilal, a reliable transmitter (*thiqa*),

declaring his hadith to be weak while declaring the hadith of Ibrāhīm. Muhājir to be good (*jayyid*). So what sort of footing are these laymen upon who object to Allah's servants who make mention of Him? They have forsaken emulation (*taqlid*) of the Imams whose brilliance has been unanimously agreed upon by claiming that they are acting in accordance with proof (*dalil*) and exercising interpretative autonomy (*ijtihad*). Then they fell into the blind imitation (*taqlid*) of mistakes, contradictions, distortions, and dissident views of others. You should also know that Ibrāhīm Nakha'i—may Allah, have mercy on him—did not forbid his daughter from doing the *Tasbih* with date pits or beads. Rather, he forbade her—if the claim is verified—from tying threads [of beads together]. His forbidding her from tying the threads does not necessarily mean that he forbade her from using them, since it is possible that this prohibition was a result of him not wanting his daughter to mix with the women [who engaged in this sort of work], or the result of his preoccupation with study (*'ilm*) which led him to fear the potential annoyance resulting from having [unrelated] women visit his home. Or it could have been out of him following his Shaykh (Ibn Mas'ūd) in the dislike of [merely] counting [the number of times one glorifies Allah], or for other possibilities. Whatever the reasons may have been, the report cannot be used as proof. However, what Shaykh Al-Albānī missed was that in the report (*athar*) of Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī there is [mention]

that the women had beads (*tasābīh*) they used for glorification. This too happened during the era of the Successors (Tābīʿīn). So, the Shaykh has presented something that is actually works against him, not in his favor. So, comprehend, my learned brother, and ponder!

Can I Praise God More Than 100 Times?

Section 6

Al-Albānī said,

> "Someone might say: "While counting with the fingers is mentioned in the Sunnah, it is not possible to keep an exact count if the number is large."
>
> [If someone says this] the response would be: "This argument has only presented itself as the result of another innovation. It is to mention Allah a restricted number of times, insomuch as the All-Wise Lawgiver (Allah) has not introduced [it]. So this innovation required another innovation. It is the *subha*. For, in actuality, the highest number that has been mentioned in the authentic Sunna—in what I recall at the moment—is one hundred times. And that *is* possible to precisely calculate with ease for whoever adopts this as a custom." [End of Al-Albānī's quote, p. 99]

It is as if Shaykh Al-Albānī holds the view that when there is a large number, which is difficult to calculate [precisely] with the fingers, there is no objection to using the *subḥa*. However, since this does not exist in the authentic Sunna, to use one is an innovation (*bid'a*), because no more than one hundred times is

known in the Sunna. So, due to the Shaykh's lack of knowledge of the existence of a number greater than one hundred in the Sunna, he ruled that the *subha* is an innovation. On the contrary, this is an arbitrary biased judgment (taḥakkum), and a grievous far cry from the Sunna. So if we were to present to the Shaykh what has been mentioned in the authentic Sunna, would he retract his statement?

[1] [As for] His statement, "...mentioning Allah a restricted number of times insomuch as the All-Wise Lawgiver (Allah) has not introduced [it]...etc." You should know that the Law Giver has encouraged that Allah be mentioned (dhikr) very often, and this [encouragement] has reached the authority of indisputable authenticity (*tawatur*). And [to mention Allah] 'often' has no limit. It has been mentioned that a large number of the Companions and Successors observed a custom of mentioning Allah (dhikr) in such large numbers that would reach one hundred thousand, forty thousand, and ten thousand [times in one sitting]. So were these [people] innovators, or are we ignorant of the law? The first thing is inconceivable. So the second must be fact.

[2] As long as the mention of Allah often in all of its forms is something recommended and desirable, then being constant in doing it is also recommended. The messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

أحب الدين إلى الله أدومه و إن قل

"The most beloved form of religious practice (*din*) to Allah is what is done most consistently even it is small."

Bukhārī related it, and because of it, it is known that mentioning Allah by the hundreds and the thousands is something desirable. It is also desirable to remain constant in doing so. This is what the Companions did, as will be shown. Rather, whoever refers to *Al-Zuhd* and *Al-Ḥilya* will find much of that [practice reported about them]. So how is it possible to accuse the eminent Imams from the scholars and righteous of innovation due to the lack of comprehension and insufficient research? Truly this is something amazing!

[3] [As for] His (Al-Albānī's) statement, "the greatest number that has come in the authentic Sunna—in what I recall at the moment—is one hundred times...etc."

[Well] as long as you do not recall at the time of writing [the book], then we shall remind you as we remind our brothers. For truly the reminder benefits the believers. The messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

من قال حين يصبح و حين يمسي سبحان الله و بحمده مائة مرة لم يأت أحد يوم القيامة بأفضل مما جاء به إلا أحد قال مثل ما قال أو زاد عليه

> "Whoever says at the time he wakes in the morn and at the time he enters the night, 'Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdihi' (Glory to Allah and with praise of Him), one hundred times, none will come on the Day of Resurrection with anything superior to what he has come with except for one who has said the like of what he said or has added more to it."

Muslim related it (16/17 *Muslim bi Sharḥ An-Nawwawī*).

The messenger of Allah ﷺ also said,

أ يعجز أحدكم أن يكسب في كل يوم ألف حسنة؟ فسأله سائل من جلسائه كيف يكسب ألف حسنة قال: يسبح مائة تسبيحة فتكتب له ألف حسنة, أو تحط عنه ألف سيئة.

> "Is any of you incapable of earning every day one thousand good deeds?" So, one of those in his company asked him, "How can one earn one thousand good deeds?" He said, "He recites '*Subḥān Allāh*' one hundred times, so that one thousand good deeds are written for him or one thousand bad deeds will be reduced from him."

Muslim related it (16/20 *Muslim bi Sharḥ An-Nawwawī*). So look at his statement, "...every day..." So who does not desire to earn every day *one hundred* thousand good deeds, thereby preserving

this immense earning? Would such a person be an innovator? There is also a report that mentions more than one hundred. Aḥmad and Ṭabārānī reported on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr who said, "The messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

> "Whoever says 'Lā ilāha illā Allāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu lahu al-mulku wa lahu al-ḥamdu wa Huwa 'alā kulli shay'in Qadīr' two hundred times in a day, no one who has come before him has surpassed him, and no one after him will catch him except by doing something more superior than his doing."

Haythami said, "The narrators of Aḥmad are reliable (thiqāt), and I am unfamiliar with some of the narrators of Ṭabārānī." *Majma' Al-Zawā'id* [10.86]

Did the Saḥābā Use Pebbles and Datepits For Glorification?

Section 7

You should know that a group of the Companions did indeed use date pits and pebbles during the glorification of Allah (tasbīḥ), and it has already been established that the Companions did not commit innovation. This has been mentioned with strong chains of transmission about Abū Al-Darda, Abū Hurayra, Sa'd. Abī Waqqas, Abū Ṣafiya, and others. There are also other similar or weak chains of transmission, which can be sought out in Ḥāfiẓ Suyūṭī's *Al-Minḥa.* In fact, whoever reviews books like the *Tabāqat* of Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Zuhd* of Imam Aḥmad, *Al-Ḥilya* of Abū Nu'aym, and *Tārīkh* of Al-Khatīb Al-Baghdādī could produce a fine work that consists of the Pious Predecessors' use of date pits, pebbles, or beads during glorification (tasbīḥ). [First is] the report (*athar*) of Abū Al-Dardā': 'Abd Allāh, the son of Imam Aḥmad said,

> "My father declared to me: "Miskīn b. Bakīr declared to us": "Thābit b. 'Ajlān informed us from Al-Qāsim b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān" who said: "Abū Al-Dardā' had

> some of the date pits of 'Ajwa.[57] I counted ten or the like of them in a pouch (kīs). Anytime he prayed the Morning Prayer (ghadā), he would squat on his mat, take hold of his pouch, and then take them out one by one, glorifying [Allah] with them. Then, when ran out, he would put them back one by one. Each of those he would glorify [Allah] with." (End of quote) *Al-Zuhd* [141]

This is a sound chain (ṣaḥīḥ), God-willing. [As for] Miskīn ibn Bakīr, Bukhārī related a supporting narration (mutābā'a) for him as did Muslim and others in the major hadith canons (al-uṣūl). Ibn 'Ammār declared him to be reliable (thiqa). And Aḥmad, Ibn Ma'īn, and Abū Ḥātim said,

> "There is no harm with him (lā ba'sa bihi), but those who took issue with him—like Abū Aḥmad Al-Ḥākim– [did so] with relation to his hadiths related on the authority of Sa'īd b. 'Abd Al-'Azīz and Shu'ba, because, he did not relate directly from them." (*Tahdhīb* [10/120]), (*Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* [4/1/329])

- *Thābit ibn 'Ajlān* is a Syrian Tābi'ī (Successor) who is reliable. Bukhārī relied on his reports. Ibn Ma'īn declared him to be reliable. Duhaym and Nasā'ī said, "There is no harm with him."

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[57] Translator's Note: According to Al-Fayrūzābādi, *'Ajwa* is a name given to certain dates that grow in the Hegaz. He defines them as "dried dates" (al-tamr al-makhshī). The term is also used to describe "dates in Medinah." (Al-Fayrūzābādī, Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad. *Al-Qāmūs Al-Muḥīṭ*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995, p. 1178)

Abū Ḥātim said, "There is no harm with him. He is fit for hadith (ṣāliḥ al-hadith)." But Aḥmad remained neutral about him (tawaqqafa fihi), but it was as if he considered him to be flawed (marrada amrahu). Ibn 'Adi considered three hadiths of his to be odd, but this does not taint him, since, who, of all the transmitters, does not give isolated reports or have misgivings? As for the statement of Al-'Aqīlī: "He does not have additional support for his hadiths", Abū al-Ḥasan b. Al-Qaṭṭān responded to him by saying, "Surely, this only harms one who is not known for being reliable. As for the one who has been declared reliable, it does no harm." Ḥāfiẓ (Ibn Ḥajar) said, "And he has spoken the truth because in reality, this sort of thing does not do harm except for when one contradicts other reliable transmitters, not in other instances. In that instance, his hadith would be *shadh* (irregular)." [End of quote] Look at Al-'Aqīlī's *Al-Du'afā'* [1/175], *Al-Kāmil* [2/524], (and) *Tahdhīb* [2/10].

- *Al-Qāsim b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān*, who is Abū 'Abd Al-Raḥmān Al-Shāmī Al-Dimashqī, was declared reliable by Ibn Ma'īn, Al-'Ijli, Tirmidhī, Ya'qūb b. Sufyān, and Ya'qūb b. Shayba . Beyond that, those who took issue with him (takallama fīhi)—like Ibn Ḥibbān—it was due to objectionable hadiths (munkara) that weak narrators related on his authority. In light of that, Abū Ḥātim Al-Razi said,

"The hadiths of the reliable transmitters on his authority are in order (mustaqim). No harm results from them. The weak transmitters, however, relate rejected reports on his authority." *Tahdhīb* [8/322-324], (and) *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* [2/3/113]

Furthermore, the one narrating on his authority is Thābit b. 'Ajlān, who is reliable as stated earlier. Likewise, [that] can be said of a Syrian (Shāmī) who narrated from 'Ali and Ibn Mas'ūd. Hence, his narration from Abū Al-Dardā' is more worthy of acceptance since he is also Syrian. [In fact], *Ya'qūb b. Sufyān* is from the highest caliber (*tabaqa*) of the *Tābī'in* in Syria (*Shām*). [Refer to] *Al-Ma'rifa wa al-Tārīkh* [2/330]

[Next, is] the report of Abū Hurayra: Abū Dāwūd said [2/339]:

> (Chain 1) "Mūsaddad declared to us": "Bishr declared to us": "Al-Jarīrī declared to us."
>
> (Chain 2) "Mu'ammil declared to us": "Ismā'īl declared to us." ["Al- Jarīrī declared to us."]
>
> (Chain 3) "Mūsā declared to us": "Ḥammād declared to us." ["Al- Jarīrī declared to us."]
>
> Each of them relate from Al- Jarīrī from Abū Naḍra [that]:

> "A shaykh from Ṭufāwa declared to me: "I resided with Abū Hurayra (*tathawwaytu*) in Medina—i.e. I came to him as a guest—and I did not see a single man among the Prophet's companions more attentive to his guest than him. When I was with him one day, he sat on one of his mats with a large pouch filled with pebbles and date pits. In his company as well was a black slave girl sitting before him as they glorified [Allah] together until he emptied out what was in the pouch. He, then, tossed it to her after which she gathered them together, returned them to the pouch, and then pushed it over to him...*to the end of the hadith.*"

Abū Dāwūd had nothing to say against him, so he is fit (ṣāliḥ) in his view [for reporting hadith in light of Abū Dāwūd's methodology in this regard]. Nasā'ī reported part of it [8/151], as did Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Isti'dhān, Tuḥfa* 8/71-72), who also said, "This is a fair hadith (ḥasan) except that we only know the Shaykh of Ṭufāwa (Al-Ṭufāwī) via this hadith. We also lack knowledge of his name." Aḥmad [reported it] in *Al-Musnad* [2/540]. Tirmidhī declared it to be fair (ḥasan) simply because the man of Tufawa is a Tabī'i (Successor) who has not reported an objectionable text (*matn munkar*), just as the one narrating on his authority is reliable (*thiqa*). Nasā'ī has also presented the man of Tufawa as an authority despite his well-known habit of pointing out the defects

(*ta'annut*) in transmitters. Such is the view of many hadith specialists (muḥaddithūn). Tirmidhī—may Allah show him mercy—was not alone in that regard. So there is no basis for one to object that, "Tirmidhī's carelessness is well-known", as is the custom of some to do. In the introduction to *Al-Mughnī* of Dhahabī while quoting from his *Al-Du'afā'*, he says,

> "And as for those who are unknown among the transmitters, if the man is one of the senior Tābi'īn (kibār) or those who are [of] mid-level [status], his hadith will be carried and received with a good opinion if it is safe from contradicting the stronger versions (al-uṣūl) and [free of] flimsy expressions." [End of quote]

[As for] the remainder of the chain, its transmitters are reliable. And [the report of] Abū Hurayra's use of the date pits for glorification has two unrelated supporting hadiths (shāhidani) that strengthen Tirmidhī's grading it to be fair (ḥasan).

[1] Abū Nu'aym said in *Al-Ḥilya*,

> "Abū Bakr. Mālik declared to us": "'Abd Allāh. Aḥmad. Ḥanbal declared to us": "My father and Ibrāhīm. Ziyād declared to me. They said: "Ismā'īl. 'Ulaya declared to us from Khālid Al-Ḥadhdhā' from 'Ikrima who said: "Abū

> Hurayra said: "Verily, I ask Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him every day twelve thousand times."(End of quote) [Refer to] *Al-Ḥilya* [1/383]; Its chain is sound (ṣaḥīḥ). And Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] attributed it in *Al-Iṣābā* [4/209] to Ibn Sa'd and declared it to be sound (ṣaḥīḥ). Look also at *Tadhkira Al-Ḥuffāẓ* [1/35].

So after this has been verified about Abū Hurayra, how can it be possible to count twelve thousand glorifications (tasbīḥa) every day without a tool that facilitates [that]—like date pits and pebbles? And the rule with them (i.e. the scholars) is, "When something is established, its essential characteristics are established along with it."

إذا ثبت الشيء ثبتت لوازمه

[2] Abū Nu'aym reported in *Al-Ḥilya, say*ing,

> "Aḥmad b. Ja'far b. Hamdān declared to us": "'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal declared to us": Al-Ḥasan b. Al-Ṣabbāḥ declared to us": "Zayd b. Al-Ḥabbāb declared to us from 'Abd Al-Wāḥid b. Mūsā. He said: "Na'īm b. Al-Muḥarrir[58] b. Abī Hurayra told me in the

[58] Let us mention here one of Al-Albānī's contradictions that happened to him with regard to Al-Muharrir b. Abi Hurayra. That is that he declared Al-Muharrir to be reliable in one place and authenticated his hadith, and then in another place he declared his presence to be a weakness (*'illa*) in the chain. As for his declaration of him being reliable and the authentication of his hadith, in *Irwa al-Ghalil* [4/301] he said about Al-Muharrir in his own words:

presence of his grandfather, Abū Hurayra, that he had a string (khayṭ) with two thousand knots in it. He did not go to sleep until he used it to glorify [Allah]."

(End of quote) [1/383]

Ḥāfiẓ Suyūṭī ascribed it in *Al-Minḥa* to Aḥmad in *Zuhd*[59], and Dhahabī mentioned it in *Tadhkira Al-Ḥuffāẓ* [1/35]. Its chain is

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"He is reliable (*thiqa*), God-willing. So Al-Hafiz [Ibn Ḥajar's] statement [about him]: 'acceptable' (*maqbul*) is unacceptable. And in light of it, the chain is sound (ṣaḥīḥ)."

Then his comment in *Al-Silsila Al-Da'ifa* [4/156] verbatim is:

"This is a chain. It transmitters—all of them—are the [same] transmitters of Al-Bukhari except for Al-Muharrir. Abi Hurayra. For, verily he is one of the transmitters of Al-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah only. And only Ibn Ḥibbān declared him to be reliable. For that reason, Al-Hafiz Ibn Ḥajar did not consider him to be reliable. Rather, he found it sufficient to say [about him]: "Acceptable" i.e. when supported by other narrators ('inda al-mutAbā'a)

[End of quote]

So look at this contradiction—may Allah show me and you mercy. He declares the transmitter to be reliable, and then weakens the chain because of him. He considers Al-Hafiz to be mistaken, and then he accepts his statement.

[59] However, I did not find it in the published version of *Zuhd*. And let it be known that the published copy is smaller than the original manuscript by much. Hafiz said about it in *Ta'jil Al-Manfa'a*, p. 11,

"Verily it is a large book. It is one third the size of *Al-Musnad* despite the greatness in size of *Al-Musnad*. And there are a great many of the hadiths and successor traditions (*athar*) that are not in *Al-Musnad*."

[End of quote]

So may Allah show mercy to Imam Ahmad and reward him on our behalf the best reward.

fair (ḥasan) up to Na'im who I did not find a biography for among the books of transmitters in my possession. And Allah knows best.

[3] The report of Abū Ṣafiya: Imam Aḥmad reported in *Zuhd*, saying,

> "'Affān declared to us": "'Abd Al-Wāhid. Ziyād declared to us from Yūnus. 'Ubayd from his mother who said: "I saw Abū Ṣafiya—a man from the companions of the Prophet ﷺ who was our neighbor." She said: "He used to glorify (Allah) using pebbles."

This is a sound chain (ṣaḥīḥ). Its transmitters are reliable and independently authoritative. If, however, someone was to say that Yūnus b. 'Ubayd is the only one who reported on the authority of his mother as Imam Muslim b. Ḥajjāj mentioned in *Al-Munfaridāt* [19], and no one declared him to be reliable; so, how can she be presented as an authority? I would respond with the following:

[1] [As for] the mother of Yūnus, others beside her son have also reported on her authority, as reported by Al-Mu'alla b. Al-'Alam in *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* [8/333] and in *Tārīkh Al-KAbīr* [9/44]. There he mentioned neither a devaluation nor a vindication [for him]. She also fulfills the conditions of Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Thiqat*, even though I found no mention of her therein. So, she is [merely]

of unknown character status (mastūra) due to the removal of doubt about who she is (li irtifā' jahālati al-'ayn) resulting from the reports of two [different transmitters]. Ignorance about [her] character status remains [an issue though]. Nevertheless, the hadiths of transmitters of unknown character status of past eras is acceptable. So, what more can be said (fa mā bāluka) when one happens to be from the *Tābī'in*! This is the supported practice in many of the books of hadith as Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Al-Ṣalāḥ established in *Al-Muqaddima*, p. 145.

[2] The leading hadith critics (al-a'imma al-ḥuffāẓ al-athbāt), those who published works about the Companions—and among them are Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and others—presented as proof that Abū Ṣafiya is one of the Companions (Sahabā). To boot, [some said that he was] one of the Emigrants, [establishing this by) relying upon the chain of narration of Yūnus b. 'Ubayd's mother. And in all of the versions, there is mention of the pebbles and date pits. This is the greatest proof and the clearest evidence of their acceptance of the narration of Umm Yūnus (the mother of Yūnus) and their declaration that she was reliable. What supports this, strengthens it, and clarifies it is that Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] mentioned in the introduction to *Al-Iṣābā* [1/4-5] that he arranged it according to four classifications:

> *"The first class* relates to those whose status as 'Companion' was mentioned according to the narration coming on his authority or on others', equally if the chain is sound (ṣaḥīḥ), fair (ḥasan), or weak (da'īf), or if his mention occurred in a way that indicates the status of being a 'Companion' in no specific fashion." Then he said, "And I clarify that in each biography." [End of quote]

You will also notice that he mentions in the biography of Abū Ṣafiya his status of being a 'Companion' (ṣuḥba) without any distinction or comment, something that indicates that the chain in his view is either sound (ṣaḥīḥ) or fair (ḥasan).

NOTE: Al-Albānī in his refutation of Shaykh Al-Ḥabāshī attributed weakness to the report of Abū Ṣafiya with the following [comment]:

Al-Albānī said, "In the chain [leading] to him is the mother of Yūnus b. 'Ubayd. There is no mention of her in any of the books of biographies." [End of quote]

This is an error from Al-Albānī, for surely the mother of Yūnus is mentioned by Bukhārī in *Tārīkh Al-Kabīr* [9/44]; and Muslim mentioned her in *Al-Munfaridāt*, p. 19; Ibn Abī Ḥātim also

mentioned her in *Al-Jarḥ wa Al-Ta'dīl* [8/333]. So how can it be said, "There is no mention of her in the books of biographies"? Now, let us ask Shaykh Al-Albānī: What do you have to say about Abū Ṣafiya? Is he a Companion or not? If you respond in the negative, you have gone against the path of the hadith masters (ḥuffāẓ), and you've come up with an objectionable statement, which is [also] meaningless. But, if you respond in the affirmative, there is no way to establish the companionship of Abū Ṣafiya except by way of the mother of Yūnus (Umm Yūnus) wherein [it is mentioned that] he used to do glorification with pebbles and date pits. You are obliged, then, to accept the logic of the second [proposition], while there is no way for you to reason otherwise[60]. Accordingly, it isn't possible to rule that the *subha* (dhikr beads) is an innovation. And Allah is sought for help! Besides this, there are other Successor reports (*athar*) I have not mentioned due to the weakness in them. Check if you'd like [Al-Muṣannaf] of Ibn Abū Shayba [2/389], and *Al-Minḥa* in *Al-Ḥāwi* of Suyūṭī [2/4].

* * *

[60] And I add to this that Al-Albānī, when he wants to present as proof one lesser than Umm Yūnus, he does so. Nay, he even expressly accepts the narration of those of unknown character status amongst the Tābi'īn. So he says about one Tābi'ī narrator verbatim:

> "And as a whole, the man is of unknown character status (mastūr al-ḥāl). But, the soul finds comfort in advancing as proof the hadith of his likes, one of those of unknown status from the Tābi'īn. And according to that [rule], many of the scholarly critics have acted."

It was one of the customs of the Salaf to glorify [Allah] amply. Ḥāfiẓ Suyūṭī said in *Al-Minḥa*:

> "Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd Al-Ghanī said in *Al-Kamāl* under the biography of Abū Al-Dardā' 'Uwaymir that he used to say 'Subḥān Allāh' during the day one hundred thousand times." He also mentioned on the authority of Salama b. Shabīb that he said, "Khālid b. Ma'dān used to say 'Subḥān Allāh' during the day forty thousand times."[End of quote]

His saying 'during the day' indicates [that he maintained] consistency regarding the aforementioned number. Suyūṭī said, "And of what is known and proven is that one hundred thousand—rather, forty thousand or fewer than that—cannot be counted precisely with the fingertips. Therefore, this proves that they used to count with a tool. And Allah knows best." [End of quote]

Tirmidhī reported in *Du'ā'* (12/298) on the authority of Muslim b. 'Amr who said, "'Umayr b. Hāni' used to pray every night one thousand units (rak'āt), and he would say 'Subḥān Allāh' one hundred thousand times." Then when you reflect deeply on what I have mentioned in this section, you know the value of Al-Albānī's statement [that], "This argument is merely the result of another innovation. It is mentioning Allah a specific number of

times, insomuch that the Wise Law Giver hasn't introduced [it]. So this innovation required another innovation. It is the *subha* (*dhikr* beads)" [The end of the quote verbatim]. So comprehend and ponder! Allah is to be sought for help.

Did The Predecessors Use the Subḥa?

Section 8

The overwhelming majority of the Salaf and the Khalaf definitely used the *subha*. Ḥāfiẓ Suyūṭī said in *Al-Minḥa*,

> "And the prohibition against the permissibility of counting the *dhikr* (i.e. number of times of mentioning of Allah) with the beads has not been reported on the authority any one of the Salaf or the Khalaf. Rather, most of them used to count with them without any dislike." [End of quote] Look at *Al-Ḥāwī fī Al-Fatāwī* [2/5]

I, myself, have collected many of the statements of the distinguished reliable scholars that relate its permissibility. In fact, I deemed it appropriate to limit [those quotes] here, to what will achieve the objective.

[1] Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiya said [*Majmū' al-Fatāwā*: 22/506],

> "And counting the number of glorifications with the fingers is a Sunna. The Prophet ﷺ said to the women:

> "Glorify Allah! And count [it] with [your] fingers, because indeed they will be questioned and asked to speak."

> As for counting with date pits and pebbles and the like of that, it is good, and there were among the Ṣaḥāba those who did that. The Prophet ﷺ once saw the Mother of the Faithful doing glorification with pebbles, and he approved of her doing that. It was also related that Abū Hurayra used to glorify [Allah] with them..."

As for glorifying [Allah] with what is placed in an array of beads and the like, He said, "It is good, not disliked."

[2] The The Most Learned Ibn Al-Qayyim—may Allah have mercy on him—said in *Al-Wābil Al-Ṣayyib*, p. 295:

> "Section 68 deals with counting the glorification (*tasbīḥ*) with the fingers, and that such is more superior than the *subḥa* (*dhikr* beads)." [End of quote]

[3] The Most Learned Muḥammad b. 'Alī Al-Shawkānī (*Nayl al-Awṭār*: 2/353):

> "And the two other hadiths—i.e. the hadith of Sa'd and Ṣafiya both indicate the permissibility of counting the *tasbīḥ* with date pits and pebbles. Similar is the

> case with the *subha* (*dhikr* beads) due to the absence of any clear distinction (*fāriq*), since he (The Prophet's) approved ﷺ of that for the two women, and the lack of any condemnation from him. And offering direction to one to what is more superior to do does not negate the permissibility [of the less superior act]." [End of quote]

Al-Mubarakpuri also relayed it in *Tuḥfa Al-Aḥwadhī* [9/458] while concurring with him (i.e. Shawkānī).

Conclusion

Section 9

After Al-Albānī's error in transmission has become clear, I wanted—by Allah's might and power—to clarify the error that he fell into with regard to reasoning (*nazar*).

[1] The *subḥa* is a tool used to count what the Law Giver (Allah) has recommended. So it is a means to an end. It is *dhikr* (the mention of Allah) like [saying] 'Allāhu Akbar', 'Subḥān Allāh', 'Lā ilāha illā Allāh', etc. It has been determined that the means take the ruling of the ends. Qarāfī said [3/111],

> "The means follow the ends in their rulings. So the means to what is forbidden (ḥarām) is also forbidden. And the means to the compulsory act (wājib) is also compulsory." [End of quote]

[2] A person might have the habit of doing glorification or asking for forgiveness a large number of times—like one or two thousand times for example - or he might have a habit of having people speak to him after Salat while he was making *dhikr* (devotional mention of Allah), among things that have been reported in this regard. So he might stop his *dhikr* and answer the questioner, or

return the salutation (Salam) or the like of that and, [because of] all of those demands from him to stop whatever he was involved in, then once he returns to do his *dhikr* again, he might forget the number of times he made mention [of Allah]. Such an individual could only remember by relying on the *subḥa*. Among the well-defined rules [of the sacred law] are [1] that 'anytime a matter becomes constrained, expanse is given' (idhā ḍāqa al-amru ittasa'a), and [2] that 'hardship is a catylist for facilitation' (al-mashaqqa tajlubu al-taysīr).

[3] Al-Albānī alluded to the notion that glorification done with the *subḥa* is contrary to the prophetic guidance ﷺ on page 96. It escaped him, however, that his guidance consists of his actions, his statements, and his approval of matters.

[4] Al-Albānī also expressly stated that it—i.e. glorification with the *subha*—is in contravention to his commandments because of his saying, "And reckon with the fingertips..." to the end of the hadith. This, however, is an error, because glorification with the *subha* constitutes no contravention. In addition, the command made [to glorify Allah] using the fingertips is a command intended to give general guidance (*irshād*). It does not bar anyone from using things other than the fingertips. There is also nothing in it (the order) that indicates that one must restrict glorification to the

fingertips. Once you know that, it should become clear to you that the command to count with the fingertips does not constitute a prohibition against glorifying with date pits, pebbles, or beads. And let this be the final work that I write in the manner of advice (*naṣīḥa*) and clarification (*bayān*). I ask Allah's forgiveness from the slips of the tongue that have happened. I ask Allah to bring benefit by it and place it in the scale of my good deeds. Indeed, my Lord is one who hears supplication.

[This] work was completed in the beginning of Ramadan, the Dignified, in the year 1404 a.h. in Mecca, the Ennobled. May Allah increase it in nobility, magnificence, and honor. All praise belongs to Allah firstly and lastly, and may Allah bless our master, Muḥammad, his pure family, and all of his companions.

Written by Mahmud Sa'īd Mamdūḥ

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